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Montana

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# **A Historical Overview of the Blackfeet Tribe for K-12 Teachers in the State of Montana**

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# **The History of the Blackfeet**

## **Introduction**

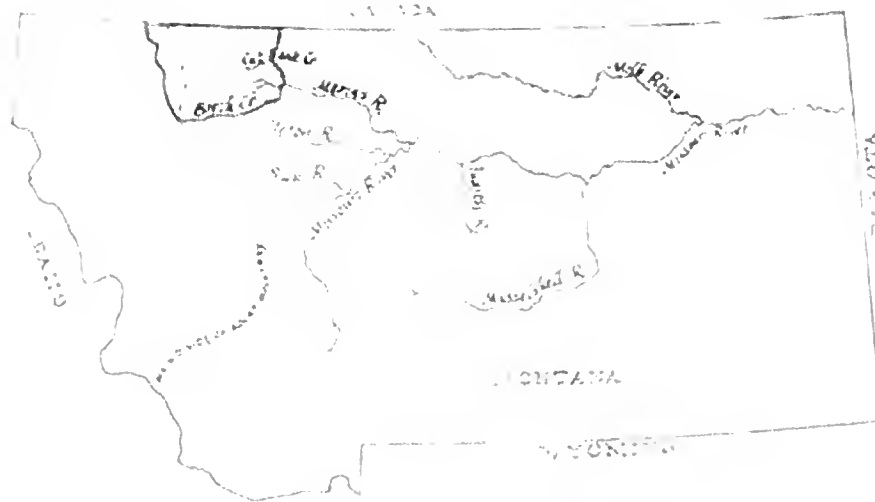
### **Blackfeet Indian Reservation (1888-2007)**

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation was established by the Sweetgrass Hills Agreement ratified May 1, 1888. The agreement was between the Blackfeet Nation (Piegan, Blood, Blackfoot), Gros Ventre, River Crow, other tribes and the United States. There were seventeen million five hundred thousand acres ceded in this sale.

The lands of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and the Fort Peck Indian Reservation were established specifically for Indian use by this agreement. In 1916, the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation was also established in this area. These four Indian reservations are still located within the Sweetgrass Hills area and are to be the permanent homes of these tribes.

The exterior boundaries of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation have changed once since 1888. This was because of the establishment of Glacier National Park on the western border in 1910. The interior land ownership has been in constant change depending primarily on federal Indian and land policies which have continued to decrease the amounts of Indian owned land.

The gray area of the map on the following page is designating the lands of the Sweetgrass Hills agreement of 1888.



Map adapted from Evers 1958

The Blackfeet people, now confined to the reservation borders, were to have psychological, physical, social, spiritual, and economic changes that would place their cultural lifestyles in chaos by disturbing the usual patterns of activities and behaviors. The winter camp tradition, away from the extreme mountain cold, was no longer possible without retribution of the most severe punishments. The complete functioning of Blackfoot survival which required a larger area of resources had shrunk from the headwaters of the Yellowstone River south to the Birch Creek.

## Napi's World

The Blackfeet people knew this land area was created for them by Napi. He taught them everything they needed to know for life and survival here. Napi's World represents all things needed for a full and complete life as given to the Blackfoot people. This lifestyle view includes a universal interrelated understanding of the day and night, sky, earth and water worlds.

## Treaty Era

The Blackfoot tribes did not negotiate the use of Napi's World with the United States government until 1855. The Blackfoot people defended the boundaries of their

land. The defense of their freedom and lands caused a great dislike for the Blackfeet people. Many recorded and unrecorded battles were fought between the Blackfeet people, surrounding tribes, homesteaders and settlers with the movement west toward and into Blackfeet territory.

The United States government negotiated treaties with surrounding tribes until the last Nation left to deal with were the Blackfeet. This strategy was effective as the population of the Blackfoot people was declining rapidly from warfare and illness. The surrounding tribes were negotiating for protection from the Blackfoot people and were promised this protection during their treaty negotiations. The Blackfoot leaders recognized the imbalance of their numbers and the greater population. On October 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 1855 they sat down on the Judith River and negotiated their first treaty. The Blackfeet negotiated in Article I, a peaceful existence among tribes by allowing needed resources for survival.



This negotiation is known by several names the Yellowstone Treaty, the Lame Bull Treaty and The Blackfoot Treaty. The name Yellowstone Treaty makes reference to the land area of Yellowstone, which is a part of the Common Hunting Ground established in this treaty. The Lame Bull Treaty is referencing the name of the first X mark on the treaty which refers to the leader named Lame Bull. And the Blackfoot Treaty is making reference to the point that the lands negotiated were Blackfoot controlled lands.

This negotiation allowed for surrounding tribes to hunt peacefully in the designated land area known as The Common Hunting Ground, in exchange for money

and annuities for the Blackfoot People. This Common Hunting Ground was an agreement to share a large area of the Blackfoot people's southern territory for ninety-nine years. The Common Hunting Ground area had been defined in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. The Blackfoot were not present at this treaty in Laramie. A message to be delivered from Fort Union to the Blackfeet to participate did not reach the Blackfeet Tribes. Therefore, the tribes and the United States representatives who were present determined the borders of the Blackfoot Territory.

The Common Hunting Ground territory belonged to the Blackfeet people. Their lifestyle required a large area of land and these lands were what they were forced to cede to have food, shelter and protection from extermination. The extermination was confirmed with the policies and actions of genocide where were openly carried out in several forms until the 1888 Blackfeet Indian Reservation was established. This stationary position of external borders located north of the prime farming lands of Montana contains resources for the spiritual connections of the Blackfeet to the lands, mountains, rivers and lakes. The obvious loss of lives through disease and warfare was not readily noticed since the Blackfeet were separated from settlement concerns of the United States government policies.

The Blackfeet territory now located in northwestern Montana has proven unsuitable for farming, the extremely cold weather conditions, lack of adequate irrigation systems, lack of land resources for cattle production, lack of adequate legal representation, distance from major business outlets, lack of financial resources for college educations, and not finding an acceptable community balance between change and tradition are a few of the barriers to overcoming a total lifestyle change which has resulted in the current conditions of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation and its people.

The 1851 Laramie Treaty, the 1855 Lame Bull Treaty, the 1873, 1874, 1875, and 1880 Presidential Executive Orders and several federal Indian policies had reduced Napi's World to the newly designated land base known as the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.



## Sweetgrass Hills Agreement

On May 1, 1888 the Sweetgrass Hills Agreement was ratified and in exchange for lands ceded, the Blackfoot Agency was to receive one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for ten years from 1888 until 1898. The lands in this cession were valued at 80 cents per acre the Blackfeet were paid 29 cents per acre. Although the Blackfoot were to receive payment for their land cession, the people were treated as childlike and not given the monetary resources but instead farming implements were purchased and rationing of food and clothing were made to the people.

Although the current land base is not adequate for profitable farming the Agents still invested the resources into useless equipment. The Blackfoot people who put in



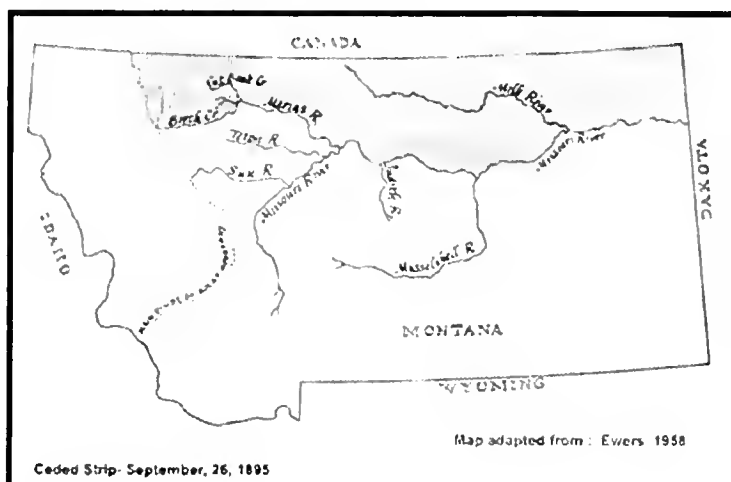
gardens would have some successes but very few. The stories told by the elders indicate if individuals did not adhere to the Agent's demands and wants the rations were withheld. It was known that the people ate the inner bark of cottonwood trees due to lack of food. The foods distributed in rations were not the healthy diet

of Blackfeet people. The people had existed on buffalo, natural plants and berries with spiritual transformation for healthy bodies, minds and spirits. They were forced to beg for adequate beef, bacon, flour, and inadequate clothing for warmth. Today the health disparity for Indian people is so extreme the Indian Health Service Hospital has to operate on a life-and-death policy for all services needed at other health centers which are located 100 to 120 miles from Browning. The aftermath is people living with severe pain. It is obvious that the behavior of begging turns to anger and frustration. The agreement states that the payments were to be used for the Blackfeet people receiving rations at the Piegan Agency on the Big Badger River. Therefore the North Piegan, Blood and Blackfoot people who were now confined in Canada did not receive payment or

annuities from the United States government for their share of lands that were ceded. The Fort Peck Reservation was to receive one hundred and sixty five thousand dollars for ten years and the Fort Belknap Reservation was to receive one hundred and fifteen thousand dollars for ten years.

The census records of these ten years (1888-1898) would determine the per capita amount paid for the well-being of the people. However, these accurate year-by-year census numbers are not readily available for use. The numbers that are used to determine the size of the tribe are based on Ration Roll lists and best estimates. The agents and interpreters of the time who translated for the U.S. government and Blackfoot leaders struggled with the unwritten language and understanding of the spoken Blackfoot language. The English language, although written, appears to have multiple translation problems.

The Blackfoot people still retained the knowledge and wisdom to survive. However, the abundant land resources were no longer available and the foods and goods issued were unfamiliar and inadequate for the climate. The stories of the late 1800's indicate not everyone who was eligible went to the ration and annuity distribution consistently. The sufferings from the invasion of new and undefined cultures, federal Indian policies, the killing of the mass buffalo herds, the poor health and poor quality of life from the starvation and massacre times, contributed to the immediate negotiations for the survival of the Blackfoot people.



This map indicates the land being negotiated in the 1888 Sweetgrass Hills Agreement. The area in red was a part of the originally established Blackfoot Indian Reservation boundaries for

eight years from 1888 until 1896. Although seventeen million five hundred thousand acres were ceded in 1888, an additional eight hundred thousand acres was negotiated in 1896 known as the Ceded Strip. The elders of the reservation claim the 1896 agreement was understood to be a ninety-nine year lease.

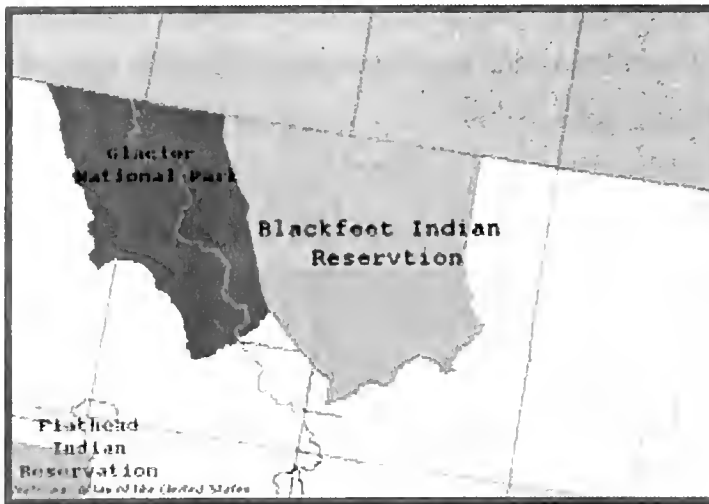
The spiritual and sacred value of the mountain area in the 1888 agreement which included the Sweetgrass Hills and the 1896 agreement which included the Rocky Mountains could not be openly included by the tribal leaders in the



discussion due to the federal outlawing of Indian religious practices during this time period. President Grant in 1870 implemented Grant's Peace Policy which assigned the Methodist Church to the Blackfeet. The distribution of religions by President Grant to Indian tribes has played a key role in the identity confusion and misunderstanding of the inherent knowledge and ways of the Blackfeet people. The Blackfeet fully believed in White Beard and his sons teachings which included Napi the teacher and belief systems given through spiritual contact. This parallel of White Beard and reference to the Great White Father in Washington D. C. describes the Blackfeet people's belief they were to be well taken care of by both. This respect for structured living was normal and much desired.

The Blackfeet experience faced disruption beginning with the movement of other tribes into their territory and in 1806 the contact between the Blackfeet youth and the Lewis and Clark expedition. It had been 82 years since this meeting and 33 years since the 1855 Treaty.

The 1896 Agreement land cession became what is known today as Glacier



National Park and the Lewis and Clark National Forest. These areas, as well as the Sweetgrass Hills, were places individuals would go to for spiritual teaching to help the tribe of people live in a good and healthy way.

The one hundred and fifty thousand dollars allocated in the 1888 Agreement Article III, was to be used for the purchase of cows, bulls, and other stock, goods, clothing, subsistence, agricultural and mechanical implements, providing employees, education of Indian children, procuring medicine and medical attendance, care and support of the aged, sick, and helpless orphans, in the erection of such new agency and school buildings, mills, and blacksmith, carpenter, and wagon shops as may be necessary, in assisting the Blackfeet to build houses and enclose their farms, and in any other respect to promote their civilization, comfort, and improvement. Preference shall in all cases be given to Indians residing on the reservation who are well qualified for such positions. All cattle issued to said Indians for stock-raising purposes, and their young, shall bear the brand of the Indian Department, and shall not be sold, exchanged, or slaughtered, except by consent or order of the agent in charge, until such time as this restriction shall be removed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

In Article VII, it states out the boundaries of the separate reservations, or such portions thereof as are not defined by natural objects, shall be surveyed and marked in a plain and substantial manner, the cost of such surveys to be paid out of the first annual installments provided for in Article III of this agreement. Article VIII gives the right of way for the construction of railroads, or other highways, or telegraph lines when the President determines the public interests require such right of way.

There were noted two hundred and twenty-two (222) adult males whose X mark were sealed at the Agency on February 11, 1887. These names were translated in 1888 and are significant as they were the majority of all the adult males in our Blackfoot community and accurate census data is not available. In reviewing the names there are very few that are used today as surnames among the Blackfeet population. They are descriptive in nature and present culture specific points of reference. Fortunately, the speakers of the Blackfoot language today also speak English and will be able to record the names in Blackfoot and interpret more accurately the interpretations. The 222 names are listed below as an example of the complexity of bicultural living for the Blackfoot. In reviewing the unpublished manuscript of Clark Wissler, he states in 1891 that of the one thousand and fifty three Piegan that 176 could read English and 444 could speak passable English. These are typed here as written in the 1888 Agreement.

<b>Blackfoot Name</b>	<b>English Translation</b>
<i>Onesta-poka</i>	<i>White Calf</i>
<i>Mokska-Atose</i>	<i>Big Nose</i>
<i>Penoke-Moiase</i>	<i>Tearing Lodge</i>
<i>Em-ki-o-toss</i>	<i>Fast Buffalo</i>
<i>Soquee-Omuce</i>	<i>Brocky</i>
<i>Si-ee</i>	<i>Crazy Wolf</i>
<i>Kyes-Iskee</i>	<i>Curley Bear</i>
<i>Natose-Onesta</i>	<i>Big Brave</i>
<i>Nis-atskina</i>	<i>Four Horns</i>
<i>Ap-Kichomake</i>	<i>Skunk Cap</i>
<i>Epe-toyese</i>	<i>Shortie</i>
<i>Enouc-kiys</i>	<i>Bear Chief</i>
<i>Moquee-Oxoyese</i>	<i>Wolf Tail</i>
<i>Missok-kiys</i>	<i>Four Bears</i>
<i>Machee-tometah</i>	<i>Almost A Dog</i>
<i>Nina-kije</i>	<i>Bear Chief - #2</i>
<i>Kipi-Tosorcuts</i>	<i>Kicking Woman</i>
<i>Stoye-Ka</i>	<i>Cold Feet</i>
<i>Onesta-Poka</i>	<i>White Calf - #2</i>
<i>Es-suker-kin</i>	<i>Heavy Collar</i>
<i>Ape-dotoye</i>	<i>Hat Tail</i>
<i>Mix-so-atsus</i>	<i>Red Bird Tail</i>
<i>Pa cops-in-copy</i>	<i>Lazy Man</i>
<i>Ah-co-to-mack</i>	<i>Running in the Road</i>

<i>Ma-qu-a-is-to-patar</i>	<i>Strangling Wolf</i>
<i>Mo-quee-ma-con</i>	<i>Running Wolf</i>
<i>Ima-ta-oot-a-kan</i>	<i>Dog's Head</i>
<i>Es-soka-a-pish</i>	<i>Heavy Roller</i>
<i>Espi-cooma</i>	<i>Shooting Up</i>
<i>Ah-pas-to-ki</i>	<i>Behind the Ear's Tack</i>
<i>Na-mok-saco-pe</i>	<i>Man Mooring</i>
<i>Ah-cats-e-men</i>	<i>Many Guts</i>
<i>Ah-chisa-omue</i>	<i>Running Rabbit</i>
<i>E-sick-katock-a-nacash</i>	<i>Chief on the Prairie</i>
<i>Frank Pearson</i>	<i>Pete</i>
<i>Frank Pearson</i>	<i>One Horn</i>
<i>Ne-toot-skenah</i>	<i>Jack</i>
<i>Co-chuck-sin</i>	<i>Fancy Jim</i>
<i>Omuchk-enucka</i>	<i>Big Elk</i>
<i>Pone</i>	<i>Paul</i>
<i>Sa-kop-oo-cee</i>	<i>Good Robe Out</i>
<i>Nama</i>	<i>Cross Guns</i>
<i>Heachoa</i>	<i>Left Hand</i>
<i>Aso-kenac</i>	<i>Old Doctor</i>
<i>Ah-ko-su-nats</i>	<i>Many Tail Feathers</i>
<i>Ke-nuck-we-uish-tah</i>	<i>John Power</i>
<i>Stomech-Chokos</i>	<i>Bull Calf</i>
<i>Onesta-Paka</i>	<i>Jim White Calf</i>
<i>Sepes-tokini</i>	<i>Old Top</i>
<i>Atiopan</i>	<i>Rye Grass</i>
<i>Mash-tana</i>	<i>Crow Chief</i>
<i>Ena-Coocum</i>	<i>Chief Coward</i>
<i>Aneshtashlowootan</i>	<i>Calf Shield</i>
<i>Motina</i>	<i>Chief All Over</i>
<i>Emu-ch-konash-ketope</i>	<i>Roan Horse Rider</i>
<i>Oo-muck-optakan</i>	<i>Big Head</i>
<i>Okaneport</i>	<i>Talked About</i>
<i>Keschicum</i>	<i>Thunder</i>
<i>Six-tux</i>	<i>Bite</i>
<i>Muckaw</i>	<i>Mack</i>
<i>Mik-Kimaston</i>	<i>Iron Crow</i>
<i>Upuny</i>	<i>Butterfly</i>
<i>Sah-que-na-mah-ka</i>	<i>Dick</i>
<i>Jack Miller</i>	<i>Jack Miller</i>
<i>Passhee</i>	<i>Visitor</i>
<i>Na-makon</i>	<i>Takes A Gun</i>
<i>Alex Kys</i>	<i>Alex Kys</i>
<i>Dick Sandevice</i>	<i>Dick Sandervice</i>
<i>Frank Gardipee</i>	<i>Frank Gardipee</i>
<i>George Star</i>	<i>George Star</i>

*Alex. Kyo*  
*John White Calf*  
*Louis Kiyo*  
*Oliver Sanderville*  
*Will Russell*  
*Horace J. Clarke*  
*Tom Kiya*  
*Pete Champagn*  
*Frank Spearson*  
*Apakeok*  
*Spi-yo-quon*  
*Secuks Stomacks*  
*Ma Stow Apini*  
*Isk Scena*  
*Kemmuteque*  
*Magginio*  
*Apashish*  
*Akkia*  
*Mexican Joe*  
*Enucapo*  
*Ah-nis-ta-yee*  
*Sap-po-po*  
*Oc-api-otos*  
*Umuk kikimi*  
*Kayotses*  
*Saka-potin*  
*Nina Stochs*  
*Emuc Stomicks*  
*Enuah Ota Supse Suk*  
*Api Six-inum*  
*Appatappi*  
*Eddie Jack*  
*Anthony*  
*Joe Shorty*  
*Sape na machai*  
*Pa-ute-ta-set-se-co*  
*Eneshthonas*  
*Puitianos*  
*Ock she muk*  
*Slok to pochin*  
*Piscon*  
*Mia-apoa-ksis*  
*Menixaspe*  
*Stomichs quon*  
*Manecupeatuch*  
*Pete Pepepimi*

*Alex Kyo junior*  
*John White Calf*  
*Louis Kiyo*  
*Oliver Sanderville*  
*Will Russell*  
*Horace J. Clarke*  
*Tom Kiya*  
*Pete Champagn*  
*Frank Spearson*  
*Spread Out*  
*Apache Pete*  
*Proud Bull*  
*Crow Eyes*  
*Worm*  
*Unlucky*  
*Magginio*  
*Weasel Fat*  
*Old Thing*  
*Mexican Joe*  
*Little Plume*  
*White Calf Robe*  
*Packing Meat*  
*Many White Horse*  
*Big Top*  
*Bear's Hand*  
*Short Hair Robe Out*  
*Mountain Chief*  
*Small Bull*  
*Buffalo*  
*Black Weasel*  
*Blood Person*  
*Eddie Jack*  
*Anthony*  
*Joe Shorty*  
*Taking Gun At Night*  
*Billy Kipp*  
*Buffalo Shape*  
*Catch One Another*  
*Good Stabber*  
*Under Swimmer*  
*Pound*  
*Drags Blanket*  
*Brave Old Man*  
*Bull Child*  
*Buch Medicine*  
*Spotted Eagle*

*Essokaquaoma Kon*  
*E-co-me*  
*Si-ichikin*  
*Shuatoin ena*  
*Men-nase*  
*Na-sum-a-Katoosh*  
*Siccim Pistacon*  
*Batiste Rondin*  
*See-coor-copatose*  
*Pete-Ootacon*  
*Se-coxina*  
*O ne-cus-omuch*  
*Omok-Shoqua*  
*Nina-emuka*  
*Peek Shawin*  
*Pete-peckshina*  
*Oksh-ah-wootan*  
*Ne-tana*  
*Moee-Su-Kash*  
*Ne-tut-skina*  
*Ape-naka-peta*  
*Espi Cooma*  
*Enuc K'yo*  
*E-sta-opata*  
*Six-i-ki-po-ka*  
*Stomichs-oopush*  
*Sick-Sucksa*  
*Shoks Main*  
*Me-ta-nah*  
*Pe-tah*  
*Petah-eu*  
*Esci-Ste-quan*  
*Shut-is-to-pit-qua*  
*Ata-Kapis*  
*Abpo-nishta*  
*Na-ta-coo-ce-e-ka*  
*Ah Kutsa*  
*Neti-num-echa*  
*Egosi Petah*  
*Etos-Otocon*  
*Sheko-kia*  
*Sepish-loo-aoash*  
*Apts Kina*  
*Tor-ke-pis*  
*Moqui-chicken*  
*Kesh-sip-poo-nish-ta*

*Heavy Runner*  
*Billy Ellis*  
*Bear Shoes*  
*Feather Tail Chief*  
*Berry Carrier*  
*Lone Star*  
*Man Loves Tobacco*  
*Batiste Rondin*  
*Last Star*  
*Eagle Head*  
*Black Coyote*  
*Antelope Running*  
*Big Road*  
*Chief Elk*  
*Bird Flies*  
*Poor Eagle*  
*Good Shield*  
*Lone Chief*  
*Hairy Coat*  
*Lone Horn*  
*Morning Eagle*  
*Man Shoot in Air*  
*Small Bear*  
*Man Sits From Them*  
*Blackfoot Child*  
*Bull's Son*  
*Black Sousee*  
*Heavy Gun*  
*Second Lone Chief*  
*Eagle*  
*Eagle Talk*  
*Wolverine*  
*Split Ear*  
*Yellow Wolf*  
*White Weasel*  
*Double Gun*  
*Gambler*  
*Lone Medicine Man*  
*Red Eagle*  
*Red Head*  
*Black Bear*  
*Owl Medicine*  
*Weasel Horn*  
*Ear Ring*  
*Wolf Shoe*  
*Cow Running on Side Hill*



*Mamck Cupeena  
Mashlanauo-ck  
Sapi Chini  
Lecam Omue  
Slach-listomik  
Mequid Se Sapoop  
Apixis  
Ockshisho  
Ashenasham  
Petah pickish  
Nina Instom  
Naooup  
Ienaquishapoop  
Kishekiw  
Piutes-ena-mukum  
Ech-to-ko-pa  
Socots  
Acotoka  
Es-ta-sha-ko  
Pin-ti-ah-cocoma  
Su-natsis  
Na-to-kes-cenupa  
Chaco-cooma  
Upsha Kini  
Esto-pes-to-muk  
Sepiapo  
Sumovquoteke  
Che-nawape  
Apuk  
Nichitap  
Napi-quon  
Cho-que-iscum  
Ma-que-apeti  
Ochequon  
Ope-kina  
Mc-ca-peape  
Nop Ourcush  
Mashtane  
Keapetoon  
Enapitze  
Manashto  
Neeha-pope  
Estomich atoosh  
Spio  
Massuca  
Kutto Macon*

*Buck Chief  
Crow Feather  
Crow Gut  
Running Crane Three  
Under Ball  
Red Plume  
Scabby  
Good Warrior  
Cree Medicine  
Eagle Rib  
Lodge Pole Chief  
Medicine Weasel  
Morning Plume  
Sharp  
Take Guns from Both Sides  
Man Rides Horse in a day  
Coat  
Side and Side  
White Cow Looking  
About to Shoot  
Tail Feathers  
Two Fox  
Last Shot  
Arrow Top  
Wears hat on side  
Night Walker  
Old Rock  
Old Coyote  
Broad Back  
The Lone Man  
White Man  
Big Spring  
Wolf Eagle  
Grebs  
Brain Head  
Bad Old Man  
White Antelope  
Chief Crow  
Temporary Married  
Bones  
Young Crow  
Chief Standing Alone  
Bull Medicine  
Mexican  
Red Paint  
Man Who Don 't Run*

<i>Cava Chish</i>	<i>Bear Leggings</i>
<i>Enucksee</i>	<i>Small Robe</i>
<i>Omuckskinstom</i>	<i>Big Pole</i>
<i>Cotta Sucks</i>	<i>Man Don't Go Out</i>
<i>Academmo</i>	<i>Man Takes Plenty Arms</i>
<i>Echo Ka-mix</i>	<i>Man Holds Pipe</i>
<i>Kut-ta-nah</i>	<i>Top Chief</i>
<i>Skikenna Kema</i>	<i>Pities People</i>
<i>She-pe-na-muk</i>	<i>Night Gun</i>
<i>Pena-tuya-a-muk</i>	<i>Running Fisher</i>
<i>A-cokeya</i>	<i>Plenty Bears</i>
<i>Ma-que-a-koopah</i>	<i>Wolf Child</i>
<i>Oke Shema</i>	<i>Mean Drinker</i>
<i>Meko-kim-namoke</i>	<i>Iron Gun Taken</i>

The X marks and Seal were attested to by M.D. Baldwin, United States Indian Agent, C.B. Toole, Agency Clerk, John P. Wagner, Assistant Agency Clerk on February 11, 1887 at the Blackfeet Agency, Territory of Montana. The United States Interpreter was Will Russell and the Special Interpreter was Joseph Kipp. The oral history of Treaty Seven signed at Blackfoot Crossing with the British Government acknowledged use of the Pipe as the governor of truth and law of the land. However, I have not found any evidence of the Pipe being present and used to govern the truth and law of the land in any of the U.S./Blackfeet treaty or agreements. There were two additional Indian reservations established with the 1888 Sweetgrass Hills Agreement which are the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation housing the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine Tribes and the Fort Peck Indian Reservation housing the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes. In 1919 the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation was established housing the Chippewa-Cree Tribes near Havre, Montana.

## **Blackfeet Indian Reservation Today**

In the 120 years of history of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, the population of the Blackfeet tribe has increased from about 2,000 people in the year 1900 to approximately 16,500 tribally-recognized members in 2007. There is a distinction to be made here about being a tribally-recognized person and a federally-recognized Blackfeet person. The tribe adopted a blood quantum of recognition for membership purposes.

Today, these individuals are also federally recognized per the tribal policy. The Blackfeet Tribe has a significant population of non-recognized tribal members who are self-identifying on federal census records as being Blackfeet. There are about half of the people residing on the reservation and the other half in cities and towns throughout the United States. The total population of all four tribes who are recognized by the governments of United States and Canada as Blackfoot people is about 36,000 people. Each tribe has chosen a law of tribal recognition.

The Blackfeet in Montana have chosen a one-fourth Blackfeet blood degree quantum to be recognized as a tribal member and for federal recognition. There are several non-tribally recognized persons on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation who do not meet the blood degree quantum requirements for enrollment in the Blackfeet Tribe. They are descendants of tribal members who are born and raised on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. An individual does not have to be a Blackfeet member or descendant to reside on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The Blackfeet Tribe's Enrollment Department provides a picture identification designating the tribal recognition of individuals who meet the requirements.

ENROLLED MEMBER			
<b>BLACKFEET INDIAN RESERVATION</b>			
BROWNING, MONTANA 59417			
Name	Blackfeet Blood	Total Degree	
	I.D. #	D.O.B.	
	Eyes	Wt.	Ht.
<b>EXAMPLE OF TRIBAL ID</b>			
Date			
CHAIRMAN OF THE BLACKFEET TRIBE			

The Blackfeet people have sister tribes in the province of Alberta Canada. There are three reservations in Canada known as the Pikunni Reserve, headquartered in Brockett, Alberta, Canada, the Kainai Reserve headquartered in Standoff, Alberta, Canada and the Siksika Reserve headquartered in Cluny, Alberta, Canada. All four tribes speak the same language and the beliefs systems are the same as the Blackfeet in Montana. The four tribes are collectively known as the Blackfoot Confederacy.

The U.S./Canadian border has separated the Blackfoot people from each other. There are four international border crossings that are used by the Blackfoot people between the United States and Canada and they are: Chief Mountain, Piegan, Del Bonita and Coutts. The Blackfeet Indian Reservation is bordered by Glacier National Park on the west, Lewis and Clark National Forest on the south, Birch Creek and Cut Bank Creek on the east. There are two major highways which pass through the Blackfeet Indian Reservation which are Highway 2 and 89. These highways are also used by the millions



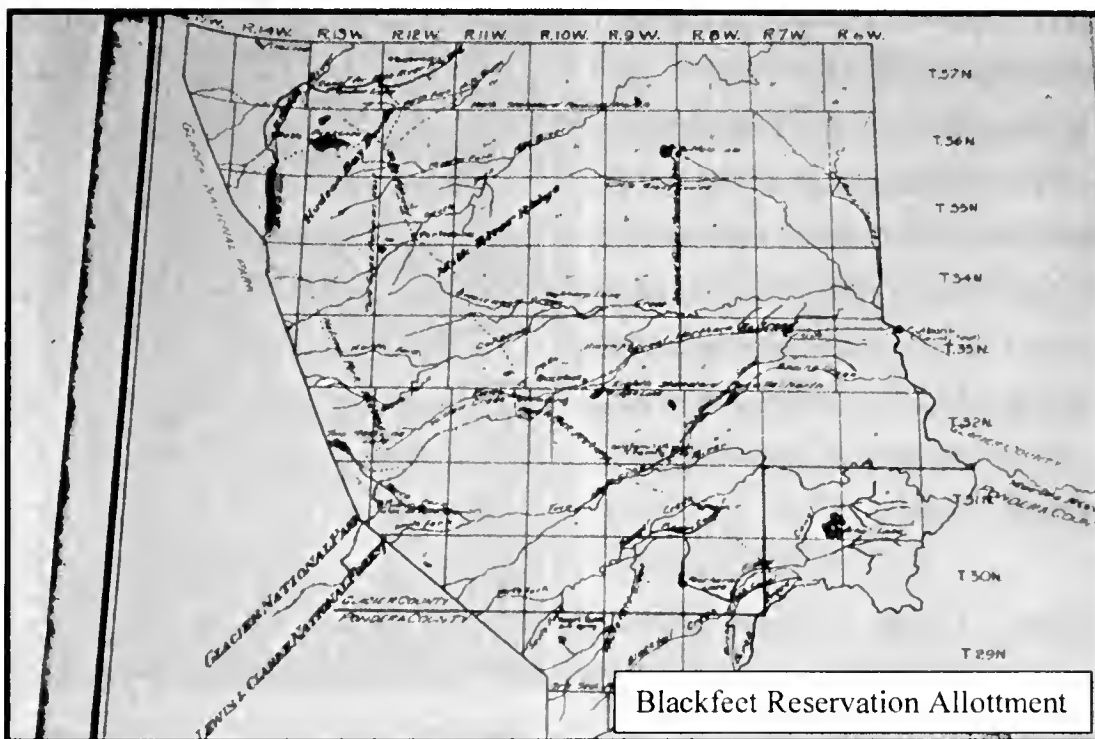
of summer tourists who visit Glacier and Waterton International Peace Parks. Highway 2 was built through Marias Pass which has an elevation of 5,213 feet. Marias Pass is the access route to the west side of the Rocky Mountains.

The Blackfeet Indian Reservation is approximately one and a half million acres. The entire reservation was created in trust status with the United States government, however, through federal policy changes the Blackfeet Tribe currently owns nearly one third of the reservation, tribal individual members own nearly one third and the final one-third is owned by non-tribal individuals and/or in fee land status held by tribal or non-tribal persons.

The land ownership change came about in 1907-08 when the reservation was subdivided through the General Indian Allotment Act. The General Allotment Act of 1887 (also known as the Dawes Act or the Dawes Severalty Act) authorized the President of the United States to survey Native American tribal lands and divide the areas into allotments for individuals Native American Families. It was enacted on February 8, 1887 and named after its sponsor, U.S. Senator Henry L. Dawes of Massachusetts. The Act

was amended in 1891 and again in 1906 by the Burke Act. The act remained in effect until 1934.

Approximately 2,656 Blackfeet individuals were allotted in 1907-08. To each head of a family, one-quarter of a section; to each single person over eighteen years of age, one-eighth of a section; to each orphan child under eighteen years of age, one-eighth of a section; and to each other single person under eighteen years now living, or who may be born prior to the date of the order of the President directing an allotment of the lands embraced in any reservation, one-sixteenth of a section. After the allotments were made the "surplus" lands were available for sale. In 1911 it was determined 156,000 acres fit the category of surplus. The children born after mid-1911 were recognized and additional eighty acre allotments were made. These allotments included surface and mineral ownership. Two other allotments were made for surface only with all mineral ownership being retained by the tribe as a group ownership.



There are several communities throughout the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The communities with post offices are Browning, Heart Butte, East Glacier, St. Mary's and

Babb. The largest community is Browning which is the location of the Blackfeet Tribal Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Blackfeet Community College, Indian Health Service Hospital, Museum of the Plains Indian, School District No. 9, Native American Bank and several other tribal and governmental offices, churches, and local businesses. The Blackfeet Tribal Office and Bureau of Indian Affairs Offices are located in Glacier County.

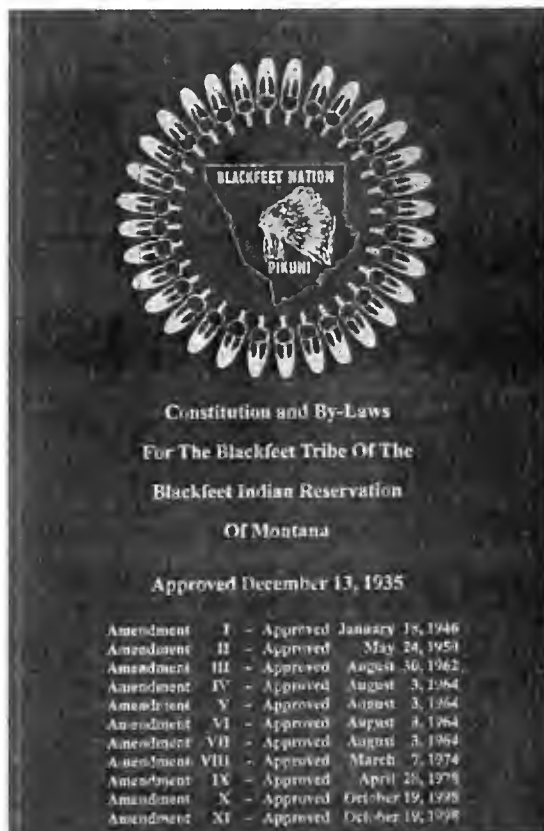
The Heart Butte community is the second largest community and is located on the south side of the reservation. It was considered a sub-agency when the Piegan Agency was moved to Willow Creek from Badger Creek. The Heart Butte community is located in Pondera County and houses School District No. 1, an Indian Health Service Clinic, St. Anne's Catholic Church, and was the site of the annual Medicine Lodge ceremony until the mid-1950's at which time it moved to Browning.

The Town of Browning was given 159.19 acres of land by the Blackfeet Tribe and was incorporated in 1919. Prior to 1919 Browning housed a few private businesses which boomed when the Blackfeet Indian Agency headquarters moved to Willow Creek in 1894 from the Piegan Agency on Big Badger Creek. In 1919 the counties of Glacier and Pondera were established. Prior to 1919 the entire Blackfeet Indian Reservation was in Teton County since 1893. When Montana Territory was divided into counties in 1865 the Blackfeet Territory was located in Choteau County. The Blackfeet people, as all native people, became citizens of the United States with full voting privilege in 1924. The emphasis of voting privilege in 1924 is to clarify the lack of voting privileges from 1871 to 1924 (53 years).

These 53 years of Blackfeet/U.S. government-to-government relationships are complex and confusing. There were multiple events such as the recognition of Montana becoming a State in 1889, one year after the Blackfeet were moved to the current reservation. The Presidential Executive Orders moving the Blackfeet through several land cessions to gain a land base and non-Blackfeet population to create a state-

recognized government voting population. The Blackfeet were not a part of this voting population.

This confusion was so great that the United States Government created the Indian Reorganization Act and the Blackfeet Tribe adopted this act. On October 27, 1934, of the 1,785 eligible voters, 994 voted for the Indian Reorganization Act form of government. It is commonly known as the Wheeler-Howard Act. This new form of tribal government established for the federal, state and other tribal governments, a set of tribally elected officials. Since the adoption of the IRA government the number of elected Blackfeet officials has decreased from thirteen to nine representatives, although the population of the tribe has drastically increased.



Today, the tribally elected officials are nine individuals elected from four voting districts. The successful candidates are elected at-large from the entire voting reservation population. They serve terms of four years. It is a popularity-vote with a primary election held the first Tuesday in June and the general election held on the final Tuesday at the end of June. These individuals take an official oath of office administered by the Superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of July.









# Creation to 1799

## Part One: Creation to 1799

*The creation of the Blackfeet people and their universal existence with the Above World, Earth World, Water World, Origination Stories, Territorial Use and the arrival of the Rifle, Horse, Small Pox and Trade Items.*

## Blackfoot and the Universal Interaction

### The Above World

Our origination stories begin with the formation of the earth world (North American continent) and continue on through the present 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In 1949, Yellow Kidney in an interview with Claude Schaeffer about Origination stated: *“The supernatural was an old man. Not a white man but he had gray hair and a beard. He is the person who created the human beings and helped them. His name is White Beard.”* White Beard is a different person from Napi and lives up in the sky. There are three or four of these persons of which White Beard is the leader.

Charlie Reeves, a respected spokesperson for our people in 1951 shared the following origination history. *“The distinguishing “Above Medicine Persons” are the Sun, who had a wife the Moon, and their only surviving child, a son called Morning Star”.* The Sun and Napi are both creators, although have a difference in function. Sun created the people and the animals, while Napi created the culture of the people. In addition, there are other persons who were created that have attributes of animals, animate objects, and natural phenomena such as rocks and stars. Of these people are: Thunder, Wind Maker, Underwater Person, Maker of Cold Weather, Blood Clot, Seven Persons and virtually all animals with exception through evolution.

The North Star reminds the Blackfeet of the story of Feather Woman. She was wishing to marry a star and the Star Being came to her and took her to the above world. She resided there with Morning Star, her mate for a long time. Morning Star told Feather

Woman not to dig up the Big Turnip, she digs the turnip and sees her family on earth and gets lonesome and returns to earth. Hence, we now have the North Star.

The Wolf Trail or Milky Way constellations tell of the wolf animals and the Blackfoot person relationships and teachings. It is from these stories we learn the importance of learning through observation and the special relationship that Blackfoot people have with the animal beings.



The Seven Boys or Big Dipper constellation tells of the seven brothers who left earth to live in the sky. It is through stories like this that we recognize the reality of living as a different physical person. These boys and their sister were human beings like us and yet we look at them as star beings. They are very important to the Blackfeet and are called The Seven in the Blackfeet language.

The Bunched Stars or Pleiades constellation tell of the six boys who did not get white buffalo calf hides for robes so they went to live in the above world. They cannot be seen during the buffalo calving season but appear in the sky at the time of their departure from earth.

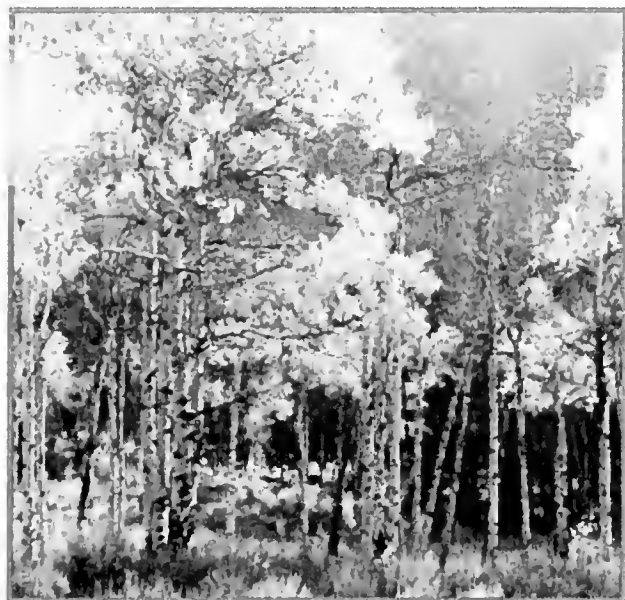
The visual star observations reflect a very old time when the entire universe was formed and was utilized to teach and remember lessons to live by for the earth world.

## **The Earth World**

The above person made the earth and people to live on it. This is how the Saukomitapiks (earth beings) came to be. It is here that the story of the Blackfeet people will begin on earth.

The distinct stories which were shared in life about the origination of Blackfeet people are directly related to the character of Napi. Napi was placed with our people to teach lessons of natural survival on the earth place which we reside. It is from Napi Stories that we know the trees, plants, animals, water, geology and geography of our existence.

The use of birch by the Blackfeet for their tipi stakes is described in the following story. The Blackfoot explained these markings as follows: “Old Man was blown by a



great wind, which tumbled him head over heels, up and down the hills, and over the mountains. As he tumbled along, he caught hold of trees and bushes but all broke off in his hands. Finally he caught hold of a birch tree. It was tough and, although the wind tossed Old Man up and down, the tree held. When the great wind stopped, Old Man got down from the birch tree and

became very angry. He said, “You spoiled all my fun. I was running over the hills and mountains and through the woods until you caught hold of me. Now I am going to punish you.” So Old Man took out his knife and gashed savagely at the tree. And the marks seen on birch trees are the scars made by Old Man’s knife.”

This example of a Napi story shows the style which Blackfeet will tell you about the making of mountains, why the mountains are north/south versus east/west, why the animals are shaped and look as they do. It is not only the visual features that are explained through story but such abstractions such as wind, hail, snow, rain, thunder, lightning, rivers flowing east and west, wildlife habitat, etc.

The Blackfeet people have a relationship with the above world through character stories such as Feather Woman and Scarface. It is through these important relationships that individual mountains along the Rocky Mountain Range bear the names of these people.

Feather Woman is an earth being who wished to marry a star and was granted this wish and became the wife of Morning Star. She was taken to the Above world where she lived until the time she came back to earth to teach the



earth beings lessons of life. She brought with her the child conceived of her and Morning Star. Today, near Heart Butte on the Rocky Mountain range you will see a mountain named Feather Woman Mountain.

Scarface another very important character in the teachings for Blackfeet people went to see the Sun and brought back the life renewal ceremonies to the earth people. These earth-above being relationships continue as the Blackfoot world is created.

The painted tipis relationships such as the Buffalo Hoof Tipi, Rock these painted lodges you hills, mountains, fallen paintings, which are of the home on which they



of the Blackfoot people reflect Snow Tipi. Thunder Tipi, Elk Tipi, and the list goes a long way. You will see the stars, rainbow, rolling stars, night sky, and day sky symbols documenting the creation are painted.

## The Water World

The Blackfeet have a large regard for the water beings since they have gifted the earth people with lodges, horses, ceremonies and other items needed for a better life. Napi with the help of the loon, muskrat, otter and beaver created the modern earth world for the people. Napi also created the hills, forests, mountains, rivers and lakes for all the animals to live on this land. He then created the human beings, he took mud shaped it into the image of a man and blew life into him, he then took mud shaped it into the image of a woman and blew life into her. Napi told them who they were and how to live in the world he had created.

The design and the use of the tipi was given to the people through interaction with the water beings. The Yellow Buffalo Lodge and Black Buffalo Lodge are examples of



lodges given to the Blackfeet from the Old Man River as gifts of a home with special powers to care for the people. The Owl Child Lake stories tell of horses coming from the water and people viewing into the lake and seeing entire painted lodge encampments. There are many significant lakes such as Buffalo Lake,

Horse Lake, St. Mary's Lake, Waterton Lake, Twins Lakes which hold stories of water being-human being interaction.

The interaction between water with plants, people, animals, rocks, and the atmosphere can be appreciated when water is viewed as a living being rather than an element of nature to be dominated. The areas of less population are exposing shells, land formations and pre-historic beings which have become a gift from the past. These gifts come in the form of sacred items through dreams and supernatural understandings. The territorial landscape and physical characteristics shaped by the water creation reminds the

human being through physical representation such as the rainbow of the connection between water, man and the sky world.



In 1888 with the movement confined to the current Blackfeet Indian Reservation borders, the place stories outside these reservation borders were told less and less. The Blackfeet people are asked about the stories of their territorial boundaries or Napi's World and the answer will many times be "I don't know". It is like missing pieces of a puzzle. The strength of these stories told through oral tradition carried the history of the Blackfeet people until generational erasing of the language removed this descriptive knowledge from the daily life of the people beginning in the early 1800's. Another equally contributing factor was the changes coming about because other tribes were beginning to crowd the Blackfoot people. Sometimes an elderly person of the tribe will make reference to a small tidbit of knowledge. The access to vehicles and freedom to leave the Blackfeet Indian Reservation and driving throughout the State of Montana or Province of Alberta a person may ask the significance of sites. It is now in recent times that the sharing of geographically important places is becoming shared knowledge.

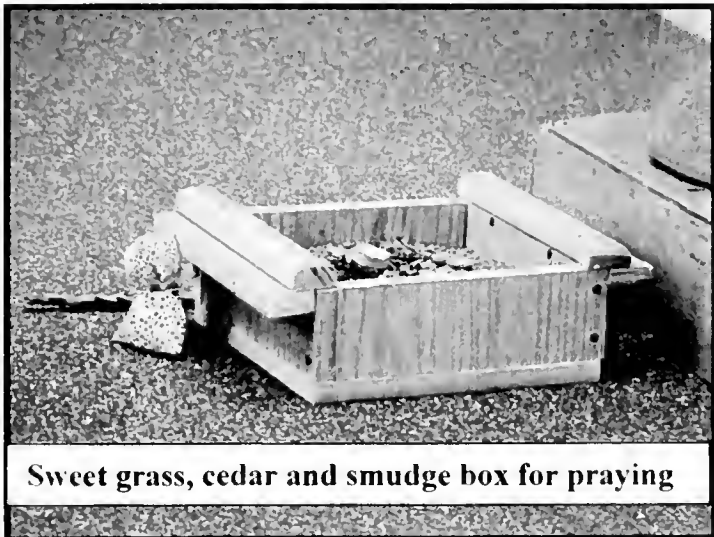
The interruption and continuity of all stories is being re-awakened today by field trips, sites visits and place awareness among people of Montana and Alberta.



## Origination Stories

The Blackfoot Confederacy people share the same origination stories, territory, language, beliefs and customs. The origin stories define our territory through Napi and other significant person such as Kutoyis and Starman in the events of their life. Napi was a very important character whose experiences created teaching examples. Our place of existence has been the location of the Rocky Mountains, the State of Montana down into the Yellowstone in Wyoming and the Province of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Prior to the formation of the modern state and country divisions, the description was by rivers, mountains and distinct land figures. The continuity of place has been important in the accuracy of telling and re-telling our stories.

The Blackfeet People known as the Pikunni among the divisions of the Blackfoot Confederacy are headquartered in northwestern Montana on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The four divisions of the Blackfoot Confederacy are separated by the U.S. /Canada international border. The Am-ska-pi-pikunni (South Piegan) being the division located in the United States while the other three divisions all live in the Alberta province located in Canada. They are the Apo-toh-si-pikunni (North Piegan), Kainah (Blood) and Siksika (Blackfoot). There are many places throughout this territory which have presented teachings and understanding to the Blackfoot people. It seemed that when the people were in a state of need a supernatural presence would appear and the needs would be taken care of. There was no other way to believe since all teachings presented themselves and the desired results came to be.



**Sweet grass, cedar and smudge box for praying**

There have been people who wrote about the Blackfoot people and refer to this time as Dog Days. The stories presented usually represent the concept of migration and movement. It appears that the existence of life for the Blackfoot people on the North American continent questionably exists prior to the visual and physical assurance by the conqueror or discoverer. The dog was used as a form of transportation for people's belongings. This concept of animal serving human needs fits within the oral history at a



certain point within the evolution of time.

However, the stories before this time discuss the decision making processes of how long people will live and die, if their mouth will be crosswise or horizontal on the face, and the living standard which equates the concept of the Garden of Eden. This concept is congruent with some other beliefs that people live and die in the physical form and also in the spiritual form. However, in Blackfoot thought we exist in the physical presence and at the same time exist as a spiritual presence.

There are many locations significant to the Blackfoot such as the individual mountains located throughout the Rocky Mountains and the rivers with their resources needed for ceremony and continued existence. There were invaluable teaching dreams, visions and messages on the rocks, and characters of important and valuable lessons existed in these places. The Sweetgrass Hills in Blackfoot language are called Kut-to-yii-siks or Sweet Pine Hills. In Blackfoot story the person named Kut-to-yis is a person who evolved from a buffalo blood clot into a young man and who taught lessons of person-to-person relationships as well as animal-to-person relationships whom became a sweet pine for incense with the same value and purpose as that of the supernatural person concept.

There is a mountain called Chief Mountain which stands away from the Rocky Mountain alignment. There are stories which express that as Napi was making the world he had aligned the Rocky Mountains in a west/east alignment, as he reviewed his creation he changed them from west/east to a north/south alignment. This alignment is where



Chief Mountain sets away from the Rocky Mountain alignment. It is said that the Thunder lives in this mountain and comes every spring to begin the renewal of all life and Blackfoot people in the pre-reservation era celebrated and greeted the thunder and

honored the gifts of ceremony given for this purpose. Today, these celebrations still occur, however, not at the degree of participation in pre-reservation existence.

## **Territorial Use and the Affects of the Gun and Horse**

The co-existence of the territory with other tribes was a mutual agreement and the relationship needed to use the resources in the land was determined by many accepted forms and negotiations. In the ancient history of the Blackfoot and Kootenai a negotiation between the homeland for each tribe was waged. It was determined whichever tribe won the territory and homeland would be on the east side of the Rockies which contained the buffalo herds. The Blackfoot tribes and surrounding tribes had existed within the borders of agreement for many centuries. It was not until the push and overcrowding from the external boundaries of the North American continent inward did the tribal conflicts arise and remain constant.

The arrival of the rifle and horse almost simultaneously came into use for the Blackfoot. The first rifle as a trade item came from the Hudson Bay Company with a price of life removal from the face of the earth for the Blackfoot people and surrounding tribes. The rifle was far more impacting in human relations than has been emphasized by previous writers. The rifle could kill more buffalo and the women would tan more hides to have equal opportunity for trade and the demands of food and hides. The territory had such an advantageous



resource of buffalo the trade of 10 tanned buffalo hides for one rifle seems hardly comparable today. It has been recorded that the Blackfoot people received their first rifles from the Cree on the north and the Kootenai on the west. Was the protection of territory and resources for the Blackfoot a comparable trade?

It is not even conceivable to imagine the strength and energy it would take to brain tan ten buffalo hides. The physical condition of the Blackfoot woman may have been comparable to the stamina and fortitude of the world class athletes of today. One can barely imagine the mental and physical ability of the Blackfoot ancestors. It is



heavily stressed that the spiritual belief systems played an integral role in the life styles of the Blackfoot people in the 1700's. The rifle became an important part of the belongings of Blackfoot men. In the 1970's during the North American Indian Days in Browning you would see the men dressed in buckskin suits carrying a very nice beaded buckskin rifle scabbard which they carried with pride and dignity.

Although many historians present the story of the horse coming to the Blackfoot people on a particular incidence, the physical size of the territory lends to the possibility of the presence simultaneously. It is suggested in the days of moving on foot it would take 26 days to walk to the Mussel Shell River from Badger Creek or 20 miles per day when moving from campsite to campsite. The horse also is presented as a new gift that the men wanted to travel and war against other tribes. It is a new and forever changing mode of life style for the Blackfoot people. The language of the Blackfoot is descriptive of each color and type of horse. The language development which came about with the

acquisition and distant traveling on the horse is comparable to the exposure and experiences of taking a trip to a foreign country today.

There are oral history stories of the horse presenting itself in Blackfoot territory prior to the coming of the modern horse. There are two lakes on the current Blackfeet Indian Reservation that contain stories of horses appearing and coming out of these lakes that I am aware of. One story tells of the horse appearing at a certain time of the year walking to the edge of the water and returning back into the water. Finally, it is seen laying on the edge of the water. The other story tells of a herd of horses coming out of the lake and returning into the water.

There are other versions of horses coming to the Blackfeet through the transformation of the Elk into a horse after the tribe is pitied by the spirit world beings. The Elk in this story is recognized as an ancient animal in existence since the beginning of time. The Blackfoot were so gifted with the supernatural capabilities associated with the horse that a society was formed and the persons associated with this society have passed to the Great Sand Hills. Today, the Slickfoot Society and Rough Rider Societies exist and their original initiation included riding ability in a particular setting. Today they are viewed as social societies and host annual dances on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

The acquisition of the rifle and horse as we know them today came from the surrounding tribes who acquired them from the early traders and trappers venturing into the unknown. The Blackfoot people became as connected to the horse as they had with other animals. This familiarity with person-animal relation was a natural fit and it is no surprise that they became best of friends. The horse was painted with appropriate symbols, the tails were tied in distinguishing ways, feathers were tied to their mane, hide was used to wrap their hooves, saddles were made to fit their backs, rawhide ropes, horsehair bridles were all items used to groom and use for and by the gift of horse.



The end of the 1700's found many Blackfoot men and women traveling south along the Rocky Mountains venturing far off to other tribal territories in the southwest. These adventurous persons were bringing back stories of their discoveries. It was the horse who allowed the people to be somewhat aware of the persons moving into their territory that displayed unfamiliar ways.

In the early 1780's the Piegan scouts spotted a Snake (Shoshone) camp and set about to make a raid, when charging into the camps they found the people dead and dying from the small pox disease. They raided the camp and as Saukamappee reported to David Thompson within two days the contagious disease began to spread. One third of Saukamappee's band died while in other camps everyone died. It was about seven years later when Thompson met the Piegans (Blackfeet) and the scars were still visible on many of their faces.

Despite the rifles and horses many warriors still carried the bow and arrows and walked when they traveled. The women duties included gathering wood, cooking, preparing

dry meat,  
tanning  
animal  
hides,  
sewing  
clothing  
and  
moccasins,



setting up the tipi and taking it down when moving. One of their food preparations was pemmican which is made out of pounded dry meat and berries.

Today, the pemmican is rarely made and on special occasions it is prepared for ceremonial use. The beef has replaced the use of buffalo for the jerky, however, buffalo is becoming an available resource again since the early 1880's. The choke cherries are pounded and crushed with a rock and sometimes made into small patties and dried for eating at a later date.

There are several berries eaten which are prepared in their season of readiness such as sarvis berries, goose berries, choke cherries, and bull berries. They are mixed with pounded dry meat, boiled into delicious soups, made into jams and jellies and eaten directly from the tree. The elder women of today are teaching the younger generations to prepare these ancient foods.



# 1800-1899



## A STATE OF WAR

A confrontation between the Blackfeet and the Lewis and Clark Expedition in July 1806 created a state of war. There were eight young Blackfoot who were returning from a horse raid of which one was killed whose name was He That Looks At The Calf and one was wounded. Wolf Calf in the late 1800's stated that he was present during this encounter. The Blackfeet were in a state of war from 1806-1831 at which time Buffalo Bull Back Fat entered into trade agreements with the American Fur Company.



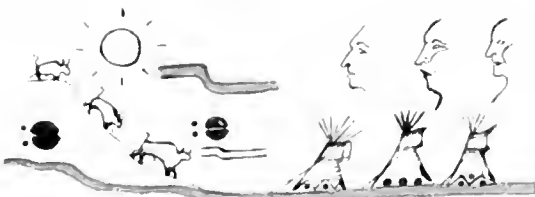
## FORT UNION TO FORT BENTON

Fort Union was the beginning of Blackfoot trade with the American Fur Company. Natavissa, daughter of Blood Chief Two Suns and Red Deer Woman married American fur trader Alexander Culbertson in 1843. Her Blackfoot speaking ability and the status of her father as a chief gave her importance among the Blackfoot in trade relations.



## LAME BULL TREATY

Lame Bull was the first signer on the 1855 treaty. Other names used for this treaty were the Yellowstone Treaty and the Yellow River Treaty. The Treaty created common hunting grounds of participating tribes for 99 years. Food and other supplies were also guaranteed. The United States received right-of-way for safe travel and railroads across Indian lands.



## SUN RIVER CROSSING

The 1855 treaty also created a 180-acre Blackfoot Experimental Farm which was located one-half mile from Sun River Crossing. The location was determined by Alfred Vaughn, Blackfoot Agent. Sun River was chosen as the best prospect because of the soil and water. Little Dog also had a farm about 1 1/2 miles southeast of the Blackfoot farm.

## BLACKFOOT MISSION

The Blackfoot were placed under the Methodist Denomination for education in boarding schools and the Catholic Jesuits from Rome moved their mission on Bird Tail to Two Medicine River in 1890. Enforcement of the Medicine Line at the 49th parallel in 1874 ended the nomadic way of life for the Blackfoot forever. Civilization restricted the life of the Blackfoot to the Reservation.



EARLY MISSION



ST. PETER'S MISSION, BIRD TAIL ROCK MT



HOLY FAMILY MISSION



CUT BANK BOARDING SCHOOL



# 1800 to 1899

## Transformation of Blackfoot Culture

### Part Two: 1800-1899

*Blackfeet Coexistence will describe transformations for the Blackfeet people.*

#### Blackfoot-American-Canadian Relationship

The Blackfoot people had a relationship with the American and Canadian government representatives since the dividing line between these two countries split and divided the Blackfoot territory. The Blackfoot confederacy interacted as one distinct tribal group and the leaders had their preferences of favorite homelands. It is this preference which placed the Blackfeet of Montana in a relationship with the United States government in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. This relationship began with a meeting and confrontation between a group of young Blackfeet men and Meriwether Lewis and his



men. It is commonly stated that the confrontation was on the Two Medicine River. A descendant of Wolf Calf was told by his grandfather that the event happened about four to five miles below the bridge crossing Birch Creek on Highway 89. Wolf Calf, who was around 13-years-old and present at the meeting with Meriwether Lewis, was also

known as Penmican Maker and died in the late 1800's. Wolf Calf, who was familiar with Blackfoot territory from birth and living near the 100-year-old mark, shared the knowledge with his relatives. I tend to think his description of place would be much more accurate than Lewis's who was out exploring unfamiliar territory.

There are many similarities to the stories told by the Blackfeet and Lewis expedition and also many differences. The Lewis version states that one Piegan had been stabbed through the heart and another shot in the stomach. The Blackfeet version says one was shot in the back and another wounded and lived. The Lewis version is that three of the party were chiefs and in recognition they were given medals and the Blackfeet version says they were young boys out venturing to become warriors with a chance to count coup by stealing the rifle and horses. This discussion of truth will be brought out into public education based on the freedom of speech.

## **The U.S.-Canadian border**

The U.S.-Canadian border was established in 1818 after the United States acquired additional territory with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. It was generally agreed that the boundary between United States and British Rupert's Land was along the watershed between the Missouri River and Mississippi River basins on one side and the Hudson Bay basin on the other. The British and American committees that met after the War of 1812 to resolve boundary disputes agreed on the 49th parallel to be the official Medicine Line or U.S./Canadian border. The Hudson Bay Divide is located on the current Blackfeet Indian Reservation and is located south of the Canadian border. This triple divide sends water into the Hudson Bay, Pacific Ocean and down the Missouri to the Gulf of Mexico. The influence of Hudson Bay is no longer acknowledged since most people refer to the tri-water distribution as simply Divide Mountain.

The Spanish, French and United States were in negotiation over lands which affected the life styles of the present-day Blackfeet Indians in Montana. In Canada the

French and British were in negotiations over lands which affected the life styles of the present-day Pikunni, Kainah and Siksika Indians in Alberta.



There are four border crossing stations used today by the Blackfoot people. They are Chief Mountain, Piegan and Del Bonita all located on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation. The fourth crossing is Sweetgrass (aka Coutts) which is directly north of Shelby, Montana. The concern of border crossing for the Blackfoot people in 2007 is the price of passports. A large

number of people live within a poverty income level and the requirement for them to purchase passports for their family would eliminate the financial resources for them for at least a month. The requirement for passports to cross the borders into Canada to visit the Blackfoot relatives will seriously disrupt the relationships of families.

### **Small Pox Disease of 1837**

The Blackfoot people lost many lives to the small pox disease. The year of 1837 marked the second great epidemic of small pox among the Blackfoot tribe. This began in the 1780's and the tribal population was decreasing in large numbers. It is estimated that one-half to three quarters of the tribe perished from small pox.

## Blackfoot-Bridger Battle in 1838

In 1838, approximately 20 miles south of present-day Ennis, Montana the Blackfoot people had a battle with famous fur trappers, Jim Bridger, Osburn Russell and Kit Carson. There were one hundred men in the brigade. One other person by the name of Cotton is known to have been there. There is very little history of the Blackfoot people in this area.

The last Medicine Lodge held at Three Forks was in 1837. A fur trapper rendezvous at Pierre's Hole indicates a Blackfoot woman named Sin-o-pa-ki (Fox Woman) was present and married to one of the fur trappers.



Putting up Medicine Lodge

A group of Blackfeet persons traveled to Ruby Creek near Ennis in August of 2006 to visit the Battle Site. This cooperative event between local historians and Blackfeet people proved to be a very informative experience. A large rock effigy of Napi was discovered to the south of the battlefield.

## **1789-1871 Treaties, Statutes, Agreements, Executive Orders**

The era of treaty-making pre dates the birth of the United States. Treaties with Indian tribes are accorded the same dignity as that given to treaties with foreign nations. In *United States v. 43 Gallons of Whiskey*, the Supreme Court stated that “the power to make treaties with Indian tribes is, as we have seen, coextensive with that to make treaties with foreign nations.

The difference of treaties with Indian tribes and foreign treaties are through the application of special canons of construction, Indian treaties are construed in favor of the Indians. Further, the courts will not find that Indian treaties have been abrogated by later treaties or legislation unless there is a clear and specific showing in the later enactment that abrogation was intended. Neither of these rules applies to treaties with foreign nations; the rules are based upon the trust relationship with Indians tribes, a factor not present in international affairs.

The legal force of Indian treaties has not assured their enforcement. Some important treaties were negotiated but never ratified by the Senate, or ratified only after a long delay. Treaties were sometimes consummated by methods amounting to bribery, or signed by representatives of only small parts of the signatory tribes. In accordance with the general rule applicable to foreign treaties, however, the courts will not inquire into whether an Indian tribe was properly represented during negotiation of a ratified treaty or whether such a treaty was procured by fraud or duress.

The overriding goal of the United States during the treaty making was to obtain Indian lands, particularly after such lands became encircled with by non-Indian



settlements. The United States sometimes reserved the right to pass through Indian territory, or to purchase right-of-ways, to soften the impact of land cession. Indians were guaranteed special rights in ceded lands, such as the right of hunting, fishing or

timber. Many treaties contained clauses calling for the payment of annuities or other monies. Provisions were also commonly made for health and education services. As a result of such treaty provisions, the federal government now provides a wide variety of service programs to Indians. Many treaties dealt with the difficult political and jurisdictional problems created by offenses of Indians against non-Indians or by non-Indians against Indians.

Basic principles developed during this treaty making period, however, have survived. Most notable are the general tenets that Indian tribes are governments, that the United States has broad power over Indian affairs, that matters affecting tribal self-government are normally reserved to the tribes, that states have very limited jurisdiction in Indian country, that the United States has a special trust obligation to Indians, and that treaties and statutes affecting Indians are construed according to rules of construction that favor Indians.



## 1855 Lame Bull Treaty and Establishment of Blackfoot Agencies

In October of 1855 the Lame Bull treaty also known as the Yellowstone Treaty or Blackfoot Treaty was negotiated with the United States representatives. This was a treaty of peace and friendship among the Blackfoot people and surrounding tribes for a 99 year lease of what is commonly known as the “Common Hunting Ground”. The area of land was the southernmost area of Blackfoot country and this land in the Yellowstone area was designated for peaceful hunting among the tribes. The last Medicine Lodge of the Blackfoot people held at the Three Forks of the Missouri was recorded in 1837.

The 1855 Lame Bull treaty negotiation was preceded by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 where the “surrounding tribes” met and designated boundaries for each tribe including the Blackfoot and the area of common hunting. The Blackfeet were not present at the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty. The message for the meeting was to be delivered from Fort Union and did not reach the Blackfoot. Fur Trader Alexander Culbertson, Father DeSmet were familiar with the Blackfoot people and many historians promote the Blackfoot representation through these individuals.

**ACTIVITIES**

October 14, 2005  
Red Crow Community College  
Stanford House, Canada  
Opening Ceremony w/ Gathering of  
Blackfoot Confederacy & Other Tribes

October 15, 2005  
Blackfeet Community College  
Browning, MT  
A look at the Past, Present & Future

October 16, 2005  
Fort Benton, MT  
Tours of the Old Fort & Living History  
Preservation's Interpretation of 1855  
Signing  
Hosted by SCC & Fort Benton Restoration  
Commission

October 17, 2005  
Judith Landing, MT  
Official date and site of treaty signing  
150 years ago  
Addressed by Tribal & State Dignitaries

**1855 LAME BULL TREATY  
SYMPOSIUM**  
Spirit & Intent

**Contributors:**  
Blackfeet, Pikuni, Kainai & Siksika  
Nations  
Blackfoot Confederacy & Gros Ventre  
Tribe

**Sponsors:**  
Dennis Washington  
Foundation

**Additional Activities:**

**Contact Information:**  
Lee Whitford, Lee Whitford/TheOboe  
or GrandMule  
Blackfeet Community College  
PO Box 815, Browning, MT 59417  
(406) 338-5441 ext 219 or

**li-tsin-ais-stsi-yo-pi, (Yellow River)**  
Translation: Where we made treaty  
Judith River

**Blackfeet**  
**Pikuni**  
**Kainai**  
**Siksika**  
**Confederated Salish & Kootenai**  
**Gros Ventre**  
**Nez Perce**

In October 2005, the Blackfeet Community College hosted the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1855 Lame Bull Treaty.

Representatives from throughout the Blackfoot Confederacy participated in a four day discussion beginning at Red Crow College in Alberta to Blackfeet Community College, thence to Fort Benton, and commencing at the large cottonwood trees along the Missouri River where the Judith River drops into the Missouri. This final event site was the campground where the tribes who had participated in the treaty making had gathered for this negotiation.

The representation at the 1855 negotiation was limited as there was dissention among the tribal leaders of those who would negotiate and those who refused to negotiate. The alcohol that had been illegally bootlegged into Blackfoot country had created some bitterness and disputes among the tribal members and one method of resolving conflict was to avoid the contact with each other. Another reason for lack of participation was the annual sacred Medicine Lodge ceremony was being held and preparation for service to the Creator came first and foremost and the negotiations were conflicting with the timing of this event.

It was stated by Blackfoot-speaking elders during the four day discussion that the treaty making between tribes was the smoking of the pipe which represented a guarantee of the words spoken with Creator as the witness. There was no evidence of the smoking of the pipe which the Blackfoot understood as guarantee; however, the X signatures of the treaty were used as the formal acceptance of this treaty. The annuity goods not only arrived late, but in damaged condition with evidence of pilfering and lack of proper inventory equivalent to billing cost. Agent Gad E. Upson in 1864 pointed out that the annuity goods remain undelivered for at least two consecutive years and do not appear to have been properly distributed or accounted for since at least 1861. The ninety-nine year lease language in the treaty expired in 1954.

The first recognized agency of the Blackfoot people was Fort Benton. The agency was built with monies from the 1855 Lane Bull treaty. In 1858 the agency was



moved to the Sun River where a farm for the Blackfeet was also financed with funding from the treaty. The farm proved to be a disaster and from 1862 until 1869 the agency location was Fort Benton.

### **Unratified Treaty of 1865**

The 1865 unratified Blackfoot Treaty by Blackfeet Agent Gad Upson and Acting Montana Governor Meagher was negotiated at Fort Benton for annuities. The creation of Montana Territory prompted him to recommend this new treaty which would extinguish Indian title to lands south of the Teton and Missouri rivers and thus prevent bloodshed between the Blackfoot and settlers. The land cession in this treaty called for all lands south of the Teton and Missouri rivers. The poor services of the Blackfoot agents contributed to the terrible conditions which were evolving between the Blackfoot people and settlers in Montana territory.

Agent Upson died in San Francisco en route to deliver the treaty for ratification. The Blackfoot people were not aware that the treaty was not honored and were expecting

the payment and annuities due them for this agreement. The failure of the United States to live up to their treaty agreements is a commonly accepted practice discussed privately and secretly.

The ten years span of payments for the 1855 Treaty had expired. Why would the Blackfeet change the agreements they made? The land area stated in the treaty was being occupied by settlers. Why would they not expect the payments and annuities? Agent Upson also states that the illegal distribution of whiskey openly and freely is resulting with the Indians surrendering not only buffalo robes, but any and all goods in their possession. Agent Wright was assigned to the Blackfoot agency after Gad Upson only to be released in 1868 for selling the annuities and paying personal debts and as well as for negligence and collaborating with the whiskey traders.

### **Piegian Names listed on 1865 Treaty**

Little Dog	his X mark
Big Lake	his X mark
Mountain Chief	his X mark
White Elk	his X mark
Bird Chief	his X mark
Little Wolf	his X mark
Boy Chief	his X mark
Heavy Runner	his X mark
Almost A Dog	his X mark
Hump of White Cow	his X mark
Bear Chief	his X mark
Under Bull	his X mark
Child of the White Cow	his X mark
War Eagle Bear	his X mark
Rising Head	his X mark
Strangled Wolf	his X mark

## **Blackfoot Names listed on 1865 Treaty**

The Fish Child	his X mark
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## **Bloods Names listed on 1865 Treaty**

The Bulls Back Fat	his X mark
The Father of All Children	his X mark
The Dog with a White Stripe	his X mark
The Wicked Old Man	his X mark
One Who Goes with the Bears	his X mark
The Bank	his X mark
One that likes the Goods	his X mark
Bull Wolf	his X mark
Hind Bull	his X mark

## **Gros Ventres Names listed on 1865 Treaty**

Sitting Squaw	his X mark
Star Robe	his X mark
Weasel Horse	his X mark
Bulls Head	his X mark
War Eagles Bonnet	his X mark
Many Bears	his X mark
White Eagle	his X mark
Little White Calf	his X mark
White Cow in the Middle	his X mark
Big _____ Eagle	his X mark
Bull in the Nose	his X mark
Red Fox	his X mark
Little Soldier	his X mark
One Who Takes An Arm in the Mountain	his X mark

The X marks were attested to Blackfoot Agent Gad E. Upson, Montana Territory Acting Governor-Thomas Francis Meagher, L.E. Munson, Secretary, George Steele, name unreadable, H. A. Kennerly, H.D. Upham, E.W. Carpenter, and Malcolm Clarke. The interpreters were Ben DeRoche, Joseph Kipp and Charles Shucette.

This treaty was never ratified; however, the land cessions to come in the Presidential Executive Orders follow the description of lands in this treaty.

## **Unratified Treaty of 1868**

The lands south of the Teton were a point of treaty making again in 1868. This treaty is referred to as the Cullen Treaty as Special Agent William J. Cullen was in charge of the Blackfoot Agency. This negotiation also took place in Fort Benton on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1868.

Article I. Perpetual peace, friendship and amity shall hereafter exist between the United States and the Blackfeet Nation and the Tribes of Indians-parties to this treaty. The Blackfoot people were already living south of the Sun River and settlers were homesteading on lands which had not been settled in treaty. The violence to cover fear was characteristic in Montana Territory at this time. Indian chiefs were beheaded and their heads stuck on stakes and posts while incoming settlers and homesteaders were greeted with these scenes.

Article IX. The Half-breeds of said tribes, and those persons, citizens of the United States who have intermarried with Indian women of said tribe, and continue to maintain domestic relations with them, shall not be compelled to remove to said reservation but shall be allowed to remain undisturbed upon the lands herein above ceded and relinquished to the United States.

I have included Article I and Article IX as examples of that language in the unratified treaties. Although the treaties were not ratified the lands described created the Blackfeet Agency headquarters eventually to be left off the designated reservation area.

In 1869 the Blackfoot agency headquarters was moved to the Teton River near present-day Choteau, Montana. It is sometimes referred to as the Four Persons Agency. The agency remained here until the 1874 Executive Order which moved the southern boundary north to the Birch Creek River and the agency moved to Big Badger River in 1875. The new agency was called the Running Crane agency. It was the tribal headquarters from 1875 to 1879. The names are listed below as being present in this treaty.

### Piegans:

Ex see qui a mu eau	Heavy Runner	his X mark
Ale ki I o Kat	no translation	his X mark
Vinakes I mi kiu	Big Shell	his X mark
Meeks kim y sokas	no translation	his X mark
Na tu a fen	Medicine Man	his X mark
Not written	Boy Chief	his X mark
Not written	Calfs Shirt	his X mark
Not written	Wind Take Mountain Chief	his X mark
Enuck at pis	Little Wolf	his X mark
Steal okes o to Kou	Bull Head	his X mark
Mick apy	no translation	his X mark
Eh Kiaux sakus	Bear Shirt	his X mark
Sit shy ar tou Kat	One who walks in air	his X mark
O to kau eepo	The rising head	his X mark
Onio ki sun ky	no translation	his X mark
Ouistay puka	no translation	his X mark
Wee so ky auk teen Bears	no translation	his X mark
So ko ma py ina	no translation	his X mark
Stock sy Stomach	no translation	his X mark
Kitch I Pouista	no translation	his X mark
Aspiso no Keet	Running Wolf	his X mark
Kiaux Pete	Eagle Bear	his X mark
Aueck se pis to	Little Owl	his X mark
Con te pa py	no translation	his X mark
Nuihah-By tah	Eagle Chief	his X mark
Kat I sak sy	no translation	his X mark
Kat I sak sy	no translation	his X mark
Mee Kee Ote Skes tum Oak	no translation	his X mark
No written	Spotted Dog	his X mark
No written	Big Plume	his X mark
No written	The Saviour	his X mark
No written	Bulls Head	his X mark

No written	Bull Calf	his X mark
No written	Weasel Medicine	his X mark
No written	The Man that sits all right	his X mark
No written	Fox Head	his X mark
No written	White Elk	his X mark
No written	Red Plume	his X mark
No written	Stone Bull	his X mark
No written	The Hill	his X mark
No written	Young man of no account	his X mark
No written	White Bear	his X mark
No written	Foremost Girl	his X mark

### **Bloods:**

No written	The Calf that sees far	his X mark	
No written	Male Crow	his X mark	Chief
No written	Wolf Collar	his X mark	..
No written	Medicine Elk	his X mark	..
No written	Calfs Tail	his X mark	..
No written	Old Medicine Man	his X mark	..
No written	Mule Weasel	his X mark	..
No written	The Miser	his X mark	..
No written	Head Chief	his X mark	..
No written	Little Feather	his X mark	..
No written	The Knoll	his X mark	..
No written	Topless Man	his X mark	..
No written	Young Owl	his X mark	..
No written	White Shirt	his X mark	..
No written	Medicine Wood	his X mark	..
No written	Running Fisher	his X mark	..

### **Blackfeet:**

Three Bulls	Head Chief of Blackfeet	his X mark
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The X marks were attested to by W.J. Cullen, L.S. Commissioner, George B. Wright, Indian Agent, Alfd D.C. Paughsy, Malcolm Clark, C. Imoda, Thomas Newman, 2Lt.13" Infy, John X. Biedler, Dpt U. S. M, Orlan O. Cullen, Clarke, Alexander Culbertson, U.S. Interpreter, Peter Cadott, U.S. Interpreter, Bibtiste Schampin, U.S. Interpreter. It appears from newspaper clipping that this meeting was held on the Teton



River since the Indians refused to go to Fort Benton because of their abuse and poor treatment.

## **The Blackfoot Massacre of January 23, 1870**

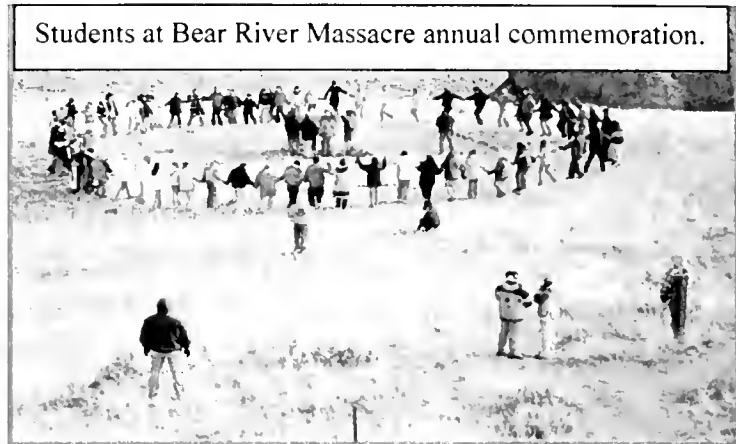
The Heavy Runner band camped on the Bear River during the winter of 1869-70. The recognized leader Chief Heavy Runner was living a life of peace per the treaty of 1855. This lifestyle was in agreement with the Treaty of 1855 between the Piegan people surrounding tribes, settlers and the United States. The Bear River was considered a good winter camp site. There was plenty of cottonwood trees for shelter, wood and nourishment for the horses, willows and rocks for the sweat lodges, fresh water from the nearby river, and the low river valley on the big bend provided protection from the cold north wind. The small pox disease was again taking lives of the Blackfoot people.

On January 23, 1870 at approximately 8 o'clock in the morning with a temperature of 30 degrees below zero, the camp of Heavy Runner was attacked by the United States army and 217 people were massacred. The death count given by the Army was 173 men, women and children. Pete Owl Child is credited with killing Malcolm Clark.

Charlie Revais on January 12, 1951 provided the following story about the massacre on the Marias. He said, that Owl Child was a brother-in-law of Malcolm Clark. That Clark was a brother-in-law of the late Mountain Chief (Big Brave). Owl Child would give Clark half of his horses when returning from horse raids. Clark took liberties with Owl Child's wife. Owl Child returned two years later with others and killed Clark and shot Horace in the knee.

He said the soldiers struck the wrong camp. Heavy Runner aka Tail Feathers Coming Up The Hill was the chief who was killed and Low Horn was chopped in two. Some children and old people escaped. . It has been stated after this event the Blackfoot people were no longer the strong and dominating force of the northern plains.

There is an annual event hosted on the Marias River about ten miles southeast of Shelby, Montana. The event has been an avenue for sharing and recording the history of this event and the impact on the Blackfoot people.



## **Treaty Making with Tribes Ended**

On March 3, 1871 a compromise between the House and Senate was reached whereby treaty making was terminated. Up to this point the House did not agree that only the Senate could ratify treaties with tribes. The compromise provided that no Indian nation or tribe within the territory of the United States shall be acknowledged or recognized as an independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty: Provided, further, That nothing herein contained shall be construed to invalidate or impair the obligation of any treaty heretofore lawfully made and ratified with any such Indian nation or tribe.

After treaty making was ended the United States government made statutes, agreements and executive orders which held the same authority as treaties. The United States executed four Executive Orders in 1873, 1874, 1875 and 1880 which reduced the tribes lands for the settlement.

These land cessions which began in the language of 1865 unratified treaty and continued until 1880 had produced no annuities. The hunting lands were shrinking and with the additional settlers the buffalo and wild game was being reduced drastically.



### **1883-1884 Starvation Winter**

The buffalo had been the food for Blackfeet since creation of the people by Napi. The new world conflict for land and resources resulted in the death of over five hundred Blackfoot people in the winter of 1883-1884. This genocidal event was the result of lack of food and neglect by the established servants known as agents of the United States.

The Running Crane agency was moved downriver about ten miles. The new site on Big Badger River was now called the Piegan Agency. The Piegan Agency served as the tribal headquarters until 1894. Today it is commonly called the Old Agency area. It is located east of Highway 89 approximately two hundred yards. The road side signs indicate that a ridge to southeast is called Ghost Ridge. The name is referring to the spirits of the Blackfoot who starved to death and their remains were placed along this ridge.

The Agency for the Blackfeet was moved to Willow Creek in 1894 where it is still located today. Although the agencies were being moved to accommodate the land cessions all funding for these buildings and moving expenses were paid for by the Blackfoot Tribe.

## **Missions for the Blackfeet**

President Grant had adopted a "Peace Policy. The Blackfeet Agency had been assigned to the Methodist Church. Agent John Young was nominated by the Methodist Church for the Blackfeet Agency. He arrived in December 1876. He had conflict with the Jesuit priests of St. Peter's Mission who had been serving the Blackfeet. His role as agent during the starvation of the Blackfeet and minister for the Methodist church to



Holy Family Mission

whom the Blackfeet were assigned left Young with no friends either among the Blackfeet or the Jesuits. The Jesuits have been a major influence of the Blackfeet serving at St. Peter's Mission, Sun River, Fort Benton, Fort Shaw, Feton River, Running Crane Agency, Piegan Agency, Holy Family Mission and St. Anne's.

It was during this transitional era when the language, customs and knowledge of the Blackfeet began to lose use among the tribal members. The practice of tribal

ceremonies, use of tribal language, separation of parental involvement with the education of the children, the non-acceptance of Blackfoot hair and dress styles was not valued, and the psychological and social normalcy of the Blackfoot people was lost.

In exchange for adequate food, clothing and the very basic necessities of human beings, the children were beaten as a way of forcing them to leave their native ways. The parents have stated they brought food and clothing to the school for the children but the children never received the items. The children have stated that if the parents came to visit they were not allowed to acknowledge the presence of the parents and if they did acknowledge the presence, the children were severely punished after the parents left.

These stories of the Blackfeet are painful for the storyteller and the listener. It seemed inconceivable that these children suffered these types of pain. However, recently my grandfather's recording of his experience at the Holy Family Mission was released for public listening. I was shocked to hear about the abuse of my grandfather whom I had never heard speak a mean word about anyone. He rode horseback about ten miles to church and I am now amazed to wonder if he did this because of his faith in God or post-traumatic stress and fear of the beatings he had experienced or both. These unresolved emotions, feelings and pain for the tribal ancestor's abuses, are sometimes unrecognizable. The study of Blackfoot tribal history can be beautiful, painful, angering, depressing, exciting but it is reflection of a very enduring group of people.

Felix S. Cohen a principal drafter of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, a litigator, a Special Assistant to the Attorney General, and Associate Solicitor of the Department of the Interior made this statement:

*"Like the miner's canary, the Indian marks the shifts from fresh air to poison gas in our political atmosphere; and our treatment of Indians, even more than our treatment of other minorities, reflects the rise and fall in our democratic faith..."*

## **1895-96 Agreement**

Agent George Steele suggested that the Blackfeet sell a western strip of the reservation which was created in 1888. The strip of land was 20 miles wide. The funds derived from this exchange would be used to provide annual expenditures of \$150,000 for ten years for the Blackfeet.

This event is very controversial. The Blackfeet claim the lands were leased for 99 years. The government officials claim that a sale was negotiated. This controversial piece of land would become Glacier National Park in 1910.

# SSPOPII

## 1900

### TAKA

Did You  
Know?

# TURTLE

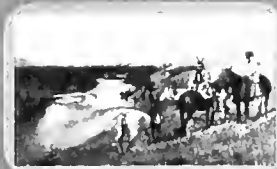
## 1949

SSTOYI  
WINTER



Blackfoot near Sun Pond in Glacier

By the turn of the century, the once nomadic Blackfeet were in a sad state of affairs. Although evidence suggests they inhabited the area for 10,000 years, what would now become Glacier National Park was made into a Forest Preserve in 1909.



Blackfoot land & water seem to be relinquished.

In 1906, through the Burke Act, also known as the Forced Fee Patenting Act, liquidation of Indian lands was inevitable, divided among individuals to be held in trust by the United States Government. It provided that citizenship be granted on the final valuation of the Indian's trust patents at the end of a twenty-five year probationary period.

Winter closeness with horse and wagon



One of the first dump trucks in Montana.

With James J. Hill's transcontinental railroad opening up Blackfeet land to further development by introducing settlers, miners, merchants and stockmen, the horse and buggy soon gave way to the first cars. 1901 saw the construction of the St. Mary canal diverting headwaters of the Continental Divide into the Milk River Irrigation System. This major project's completion wasn't until 1925 and it had substantial impact on Glacier Park.

the agency town of Browning, and the Blackfeet Tribe.



A historic campsite near the Inland Water.

In 1910, the United States Census Bureau reported only 2,268 Blackfeet living on the reservation. Glacier was established as the 10th National Park by President William Taft, and the Blackfeet relinquished over 1 million acres of land, or 1640 square miles. Logan Pass took eleven years to construct, considered to be an engineering feat and National Historic Landmark. The road forever changed the way people would view the park, driving to see that previously viewed only after days of riding on horseback.



A train and a train yard at the agency.

MOTOYI  
SPRING



Browning, as shown in the early 20th century.

The town of Browning was incorporated in 1919, named after Daniel Browning, Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington. Glacier County was also established in 1920. Blackfeet cattle herds were wiped out by a severe winter and many people starved to death. In 1924, Indians were granted citizenship. Meriam's 1928 report condemned the allotment policy.



Students and teachers at Holy Family Mission.

Federal Indian Policy had previously called for the removal of children from their homes to enroll in government or religious schools. In 1930, Holy Family Mission school closed. Extreme poverty on reservations demonstrated the failure of assimilation. This led to Indian Reorganization in 1935, the reversal of the Allotment Act and somewhat of a return to tribal self-governance.

MOKOYI  
FALL

ENYA



The Blackfeet people are a group of Native Americans who live in the western United States. They are known for their traditional way of life, which includes hunting, fishing, and gathering. The Blackfeet people are also known for their art and crafts, which are often made from animal skins and bones. The Blackfeet people are a proud and resilient people, and they continue to live on their reservation today.





# Blackfeet Life Transitions (Tribal and Individual)

## Part Three: 1900- 1949

*The trial and error of self sufficiency on the newly established twelve-year-old Indian Reservation was the rule of the day in the early years for the Blackfeet. The leaders of the tribe from the great buffalo-providing days were passing. Individual and impersonal bureaucracy dictated the developments for the Blackfeet.*

*“A 1904 federal district court judge sentence reflects the lack of justice for the Blackfeet Tribe. He had issued a confinement of forty years in the penitentiary for a Blackfeet man and said, “By that time (40 years) your relatives will be dead and the probabilities are that your tribe will be obliterated or scattered to the four corners of the earth.”*

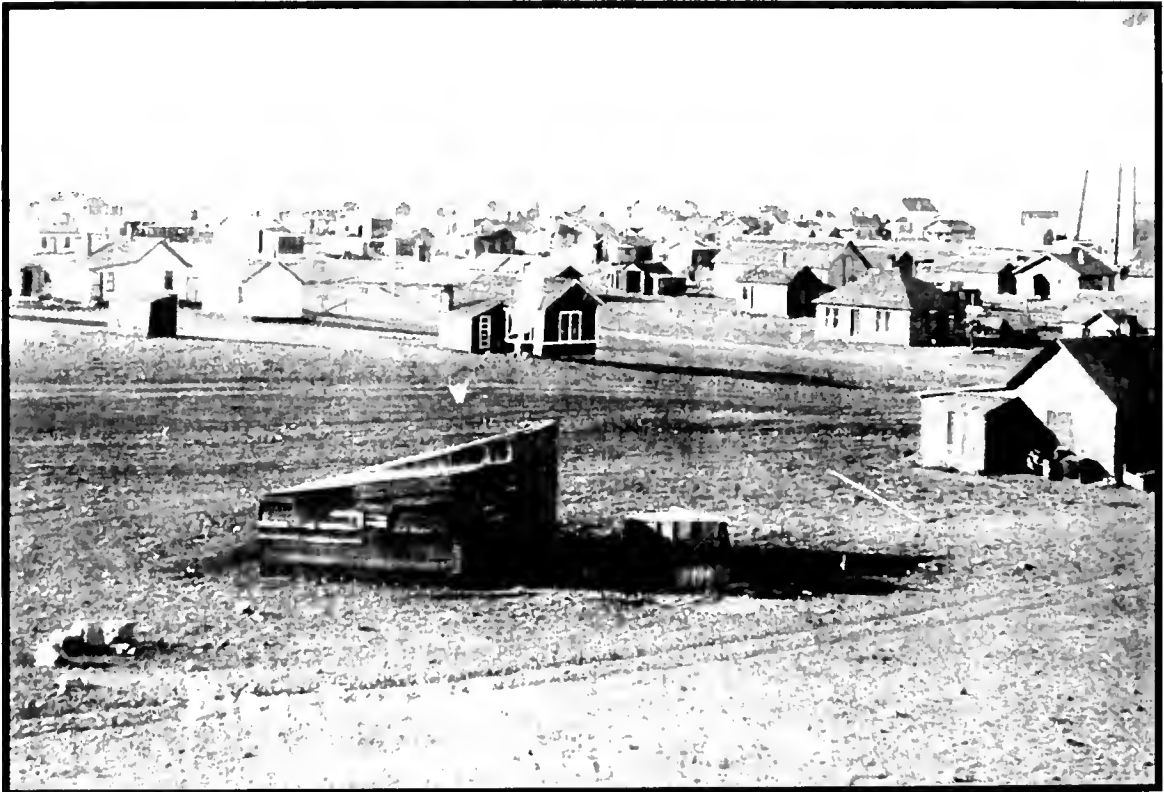
In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Blackfeet people were living near the major rivers throughout the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. These rivers included: Birch Creek, Blacktail and Whitetail Creeks, Little and Big Badger Creeks, Two Medicine River, Cut Bank Creek, Kennedy Creek and St. Mary's River. The homes were hauling drinking water from the local rivers and springs. The firewood was hauled down from the mountains and cut along the river area. The Agent's ordering and rationing of food determined the diet of the times. The border towns of Robare, Dupuyer and Valier were the off-reservation providers of the whiskey.

The reservation is about 60 miles from north to south and 60 miles from east to west. It is believed that the town of Browning is named after the Indian Commissioner by the name of Alex Browning. He was the Indian Commissioner during the formative years of this part of the reservation. Browning is located in the western and middle area of the reservation. Piegan Agency and Heart Butte were considered Sub-agencies and the

food rations were delivered there for distribution. Other food subsistence required hunting in the mountains and natural foods growing in the area. In the 1990's the Blackfeet Indian Reservation tribal government developed wildlife regulations.

It had been twelve years since they were required to stay within the exterior boundaries of the reservation since it was now the established Blackfeet homelands. The Blackfeet agencies of Running Crane, Piegan and Willow Creek played a significant role as to where families were settling. The majority of people were staying within their family groups. A few of the Blackfeet people were employed at the Agency headquarters which is now called Browning.

A little community on the south end of Browning was created and called Moccasin Flat. The Indian people lived in these homes. This small community is now faintly identified due to the growth of houses in the Browning community. In 1898, the



agency was at Willow Creek and the agent's population report stated there were 2,022 Piegans (Blackfeet). There were 970 males and 1,052 females.

The reservation lands were communally owned by all members of the tribe. The communal ownership of land was contributing to the success of the cattle herds' growth

and expansion. In 1898 from January 1 until April 15 it was reported that 40% of the tribal cattle herd was lost due to lack of hay and shelter. In Michael Foley's historical analysis of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, he indicates that George Bird Grinnell provided the Indian Office with a series of forceful critiques of the needed reforms of the Blackfeet cattle industry.

The mismanagement by Blackfeet agents included ill-fated irrigation projects, off-reservation ranchers being allowed to trespass and graze freely thousands of cattle on the reservation lands, and the on-going waste of tribal monies on Agency buildings and repairs. Agent George Steele is reported to have had about 80 head of cattle in his personal herd and owned a ranch bordering Birch Creek. His 80 head of cattle in 1891 had grown to 400 when he left in 1893 and simply just moved them across the Birch Creek where they had been grazing on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. Thomas Dawson claimed that Steele branded Indian calves with his own brand.



Steele was replaced by Cooke from 1893 to 1895 and in 1895 Cooke was replaced by Steele. By 1899, the Blackfeet owned less than 9,000 head of cattle where they had once owned upward of 20,000. These cattle were branded with "ID" Indian Department brand. In 1901, three thousand five hundred heifers were issued and branded with the Piegan's own brand. The documents containing the Piegan brands placed on these cattle is not available.

# **1871-1928 Allotment and Assimilation Era**

## **General Allotment Act of 1887 (aka Dawes Act)**

The General Allotment Act divided the reservation into individualized pieces of land in 1907-08. These allotments usually consisted of 280 acres of grazing land and 40 acres of farm land or 320 acres of grazing.

The allotment program has created problems such when reservations became checkerboarded as the sale of surplus lands to non-Indians isolated individual Indian allotments. Fractionated heirships and multiple ownerships resulted as lands of deceased allottees were divided among the heirs. Since heirs to allotments held undivided interests in the land, descent often subjected allotments to so many interests that their owners could not use them.

Indians were often given English names in applying for an allotment, and when the trust patent was issued and returned to the agent, sometimes neither the agent nor the Indians could identify the allottee. The General Allotment Act of 1887 provided that funds from the sale of surplus lands be credited to the tribe ceding the lands. These funds were subject to congressional appropriation for education and civilization of the tribe.

Citizenship was granted to an Indian woman who married a white man without detriment to her rights of participation in tribal property.

## **Education and Assimilation**

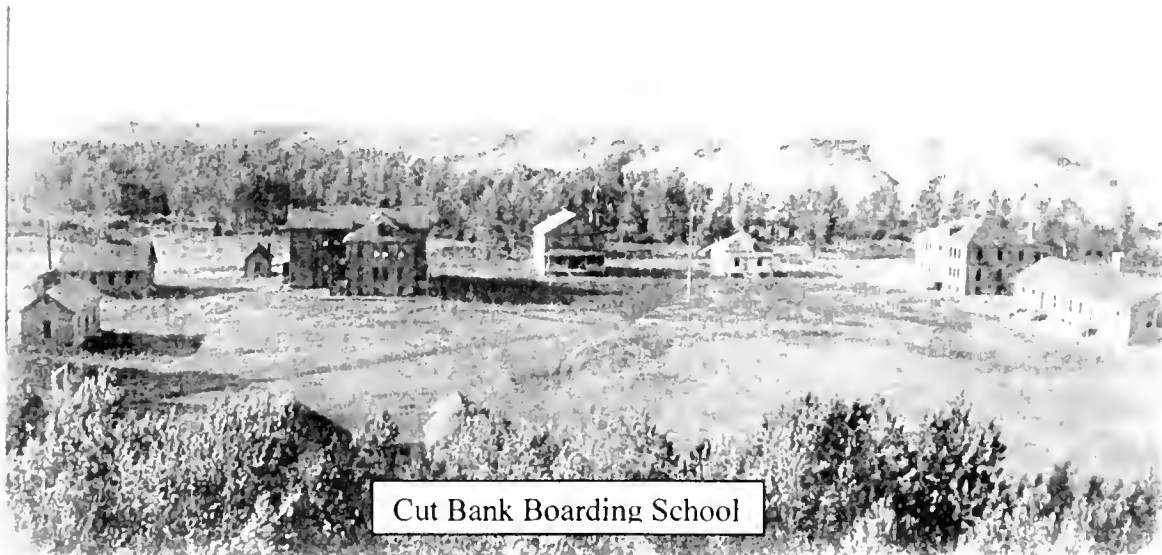
In 1889 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs wrote, "The American Indian is to become the Indian American". This was reflective of the assimilationists ideal to civilize the Indians and drive them into the mainstream of American society. It was desirable to end the tribe as a separate and political unit, destroy the Indians' own heritage, and

replace it with the white 'Americans heritage. Commission of Indian Affairs Morgan's policy replaced the Indians' own history, legends, heroes, songs, and language with those of white Americans.

Assimilation education for Indians was provided by mission schools in the early days, in 1870 the government contracted with denominational schools for education of Indian children. Off-reservation boarding schools were founded in 1879. Assimilationists were in favor of completely removing the children from the adults and tribal life.

## **Boarding Schools**

Boarding Schools on and off the reservations were in operation at the turn of the century. The removal of Indian children to these schools did not require parental consent. Many off-reservation boarding schools were replaced with on-reservation day schools. The Willow Creek boarding school and Cut Bank Creek Boarding Schools both operated



on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The Willow Creek school closed in 1909 and Cut Bank Board School opened in 1905 and is still operating as a boarding dormitory, however, the school children are bused seven miles to Browning for public education. Blackfeet students were sent to off-reservation Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania,

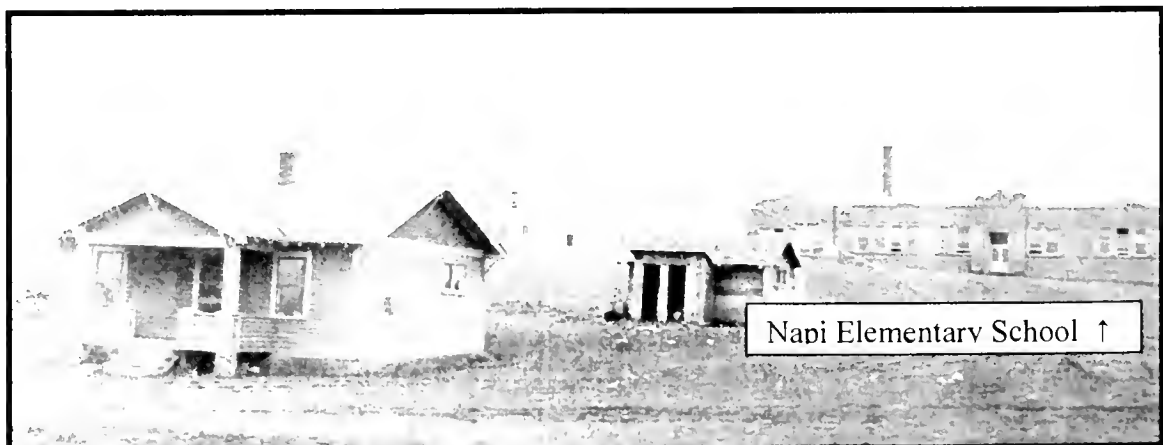
Genoa School in Genoa, Nebraska and Chemawa Indian School in Oregon at the onset of this schooling. In later years students were sent to Flandreau, South Dakota, Riverside in Oklahoma and California, Chilocco in Oklahoma, Chemawa in Oregon and Haskell in Kansas.



## Day Schools

The day school attendance was poor and on July 13, 1892 an Appropriations Act made attendance compulsory. The enforcement was by congressional act denying rations to Indians whose children did not attend school in 1893. In 1894 an appropriations act theoretically ended the practice of sending children to schools outside their home state or territory without parental consent. This act also prohibited the withholding of rations by government officials as a technique for securing consent.

There were several day schools located on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. The day schools were closed and merged with two public schools currently located on the reservation today. They are school districts #9 Browning Public Schools and #1 Heart Butte Public School.



## **Tribal Government prior to Indian Reorganization Act**

In 1875, three tribally elected leaders and Agent Wood developed and enforced a Code of Laws. The leaders were informed that during 1974 one hundred and thirty one Blackfoot people had been killed through whiskey. Wood wanted the three leaders to elect a head chief who does not drink whiskey and who will care for the people and control the people. The following Head Chiefs were present: Little Plume, White Calf and Generous Woman. The Headmen of the Bands were: White Cow on Hill Side, Fast Buffalo Horse, Running Crane, Big Swan, Boy Chief, Rising Hand, Big Stone, Lodge Pole Chief, Screaming Owl, Four Bears, Red Paint and One Who Pulls The Sun Down. After deliberation and voting, the council declared Little Plume elected head chief by a unanimous vote, and Generous Woman and White Calf subordinate chiefs by a like vote.

In 1902, Agent Monteath threatened to arrest Chief White Calf and he was confronted by the Indian Police and a group of outraged Blackfeet led by Little Dog. The interpreter informed the Agent that if he dare to arrest White Calf, his people would bind him with ropes and throw him ahead of the next passing train. The disagreement was about the reduction in rations.



In 1903, White Calf died. He died in Washington D.C. Little Plume and Generous Woman had passed before him. John Ewers a writer of Blackfoot History stated that, "In that paternalistic system of Indian administration, it was always assumed that the Great White Father knew what was best for his children. The Indian agent, not

the chiefs, would be the Moses who would lead his children out of the bondage of ignorance and poverty into the promised lands of knowledge and prosperity. There was no place in that system for the traditional pattern of Indian leadership.

The Blackfeet wanted to hire a lawyer to fight for the lands which had been taken without compensation by the Executive Orders of 1873 and 1874.

### **1921 Snyder Act**

On November 2, 1921, an act authorizing the Bureau of Indian Affairs, under the supervision of the Secretary of the Interior the authority to direct the expenditures of congressional appropriations for the benefit, care and assistance of the Indians throughout the United States. The broad declaration of purposes contained in the Act provides congressional authorization for expenditures for many BIA activities, including health, education, employment, administration of Indian property, and irrigation.

## **Individual Indian Rights**

### **Citizenship Options for Blackfoot Indians**

Early treaties sometimes granted citizenship options to Indians. The Indians were required to make a choice: accept United States citizenship and receive an allotment, or retain tribal membership and remove with their tribe to a new location. Some treaties provide that those who remained behind and became citizens forfeited their tribal membership. Under other treaties tribal rights or property, but not tribal membership, were forfeited. Many treaties required proof of fitness for citizenship.



The General Allotment Act of 1887 provided an important method for acquiring citizenship. Citizenship was conferred upon two classes of Indians born within the limits of the United States: (1) those to whom allotments were made by law or treaty; and (2) those who voluntarily lived away from their tribes and adopted the habits of civilized life. Unlike many of the earlier statutes and treaties, citizenship under the General Allotment Act did not alter the new citizen's tribal property interest. The Burke Act of 1906 amended the General Allotment Act, delaying citizenship until the trust period ended and a patent in fee was issued, rather than after the trust patent was issued.

The Act of August 9, 1888 granted citizenship to any Indian woman married to a white man without affecting her tribal interest. Indians who served in the military during World War I could become citizens under the Act of November 6, 1919 without impairing their interest in tribal property.

## **1924 Indian Citizenship Act**

The Citizenship Act of 1924 made "all non-citizen Indians born within the territorial limits of the United States" American citizens. The Act conferred citizenship on Indians who had not become citizens under other acts, particularly the Dawes Act. Rights to tribal property were unimpaired. Indian consent or application for naturalization was not required; citizenship was simply bestowed. Not all Indians welcomed it, since many feared it might alter tribal membership.

State suffrage did not automatically follow the granting of citizenship of Indians. Several states denied Indians the right to vote, either because they were not taxed or because they were under guardianship.

Citizenship did not alter the individual Indian's status as a ward or tribal member. In 1916 the Supreme Court held in *United States v. Nice* that citizenship was not incompatible with tribal membership or continued guardianship.

The allotment policy touched most aspects of Indian life. It was a systematic attempt to eradicate Indian heritage and tribalism. President Roosevelt described the allotment process in his message to Congress in 1906 as “a mighty pulverizing engine to break up the tribal mass.”

## **(1928-1942) Indian Reorganization Era**

The late 1920's and early 1930's marked a change in attitude in Indian policy and a departure from many of the assimilationist policies of the allotment era. More tolerance, even some respect, for many traditional aspects of Indian culture became evident. New protections were provided for some Indian rights.

The Meriam Report a nongovernmental two-year study of the Indian Bureau undertaken at the request of Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work examined the administration of Indian policy and its impact on Indian life. It was published in 1928 and was a primary catalyst for change, bringing to the public attention the deplorable living conditions of Indians at a time when general economic and social conditions created a public sympathetic to the conclusions. It described the poverty, disease, suffering, and discontent that pervaded the life of the overwhelming majority of Indians. It also criticized the inefficient, paternalistic administration of Indian policy that neither encouraged nor supported Indian self-sufficiency.

The Merriam Report and Preston-Engle Report noted that Indians were charge with high costs for construction work on reservation irrigation projects not requested by or beneficial to them. The Leavitt Act of 1932 authorized the Secretary of the Interior to adjust or discharge the debts. The act deferred collection of construction charges against Indians owned lands until Indian title had been extinguished. The administration also succeeded in increasing the appropriation for Indians, almost doubling the Bureau's budget between 1928 and 1931.

### **1934 Johnson O'Malley Act**

The act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to contract with a state or territory “for the education, medical attention, agricultural assistance, and social welfare, including relief of distress, of Indians in such State or Territory, through the qualified agencies of such State or Territory.”

In 1936 contracting services were extended to include public and private institutions, corporations, agencies, and political subdivisions of the state or territory.

The act was initially intended to be used in areas where Indians were already assimilated into the general population and in rural areas where it was difficult for the federal government to provide adequate services. It was also an attempt to end the Bureau's monopoly on Indian services by encouraging federal-state cooperation.

### **1934 Indian Reorganization Act**

The Indian Reorganization Act was an attempt from Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier to encourage economic development, self-determination, cultural plurality, and the revival of tribalism.

The IRA was intended to provide a mechanism for the tribe as a governmental unit to interact with and adapt to a modern society, rather than to force the assimilation of individual Indians.

The IRA prohibited further allotment of Indian lands, extended existing period of trust and restrictions on alienation of Indian lands until otherwise directed by Congress, prohibited transfers of restricted Indian lands except to Indian tribes, authorized the acquisition of lands for Indians, exempting these lands from taxation, a \$10,000,000 revolving credit fund was authorized, Indian preference in employment was enacted, no expenditures for the benefit of Indians made out of appropriations authorized shall be

considered as offsets in any suit brought to recover upon any claim of such Indians against the United States, and Indian tribes were permitted to organize and adopt a constitution, which provided a congressional sanction of tribal self-government.

### **1946 Legislative Reform Act**

This Act abolished the two full standing Committees on Indian Affairs. Jurisdiction and legislative oversight of Indian matters were transferred to the Committee of Public Lands in the House and Senate, each establishing Subcommittees on Indian affairs. This act also amended the appropriations process. Indians and Indian treaties which had once occupied the attention of the whole Senate was now reduced to subcommittee and local concern by representatives in the House and Senate.

### **1947 Revision in Criminal Law**

On June 25, 1948, title 18 of the United States Code entitled, "Crimes and Criminal Procedure" was revised, codified, and enacted into positive law. The revision did not reflect the accelerating movement in Indian affairs to eliminate separate status for Indians and end their special relationship with the federal government. Chapter 53 of title 18 contains those laws pertaining to Indians.

### **1946 Indian Claims Commission**

Indian Claims Commission established a special commission to hear and resolve Indian claims against the federal government. The commission was authorized to hear only those tribal claims filed before August 13, 1951. In 1963 a revolving fund was established for loans to Indian groups for use in obtaining expert assistance, other than counsel, to prepare and try cases before the Commission. The Commission's term finally expired on September 30, 1978, and its remaining cases were transferred to the Court of Claims.



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Kriegel's Dinosaurium

GLACIER  
PEAKS  
CASINO



# **Timeline of Events of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation**

## **Part Four: 1950 to Present**

1951	Montana Intertribal Policy Board formed
1953	Alcohol sales become legal on Blackfeet Reservation
1953	First North American Indian Days
1954	First big oil/gas lease for the Blackfeet Tribe
1954	Blackfeet and Gros Ventres Tribes v. United States, March 2
1955	Last horse races on Dr. Martin Hill
1956	Medicine Lodge at Heart Butte-Maggie Swims Under
1962	Article II—Blackfeet Tribal Membership –Amendment III
1963	Last Medicine Lodge in Town of Browning – Darryl Blackman
1964	Blackfeet Indian Reservation-Flood of 1964
1966	Blackfeet Tribe sold land on east end of reservation for \$5.00 an acre
1972	Blackfeet Indian Writing Company opens
1972	One full-time Indian teacher in Browning High School to 86.2% Indian students
1974	Blackfeet Tribe charts Blackfeet Community College
1977	Forrest Gerard confirmed as the first Indian Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs
1978	Percy DeWolfe elected to State Senate
1978	Earl Old Person became Chief of the Blackfeet Tribe
1978	Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act Passed
1979	Indian Land Consolidation Act passed
1983	First National Bank closed
1987	Piegan Institute established
1987	Blackfeet National Bank, first tribally-owned, federally chartered bank on an Indian Reservation
1987	American Museum of Natural History returned Blackfeet human remains taken from Old Agency on Badger Creek
1988	The movie “War Party” filmed in Browning

- 1994 Tribally Controlled Community Colleges receive Land Grant status
- 1994 Heart Butte High School completed
- 2001 15,441 enrolled Blackfeet members
- 2005 Charging Home Park opened
- 2006 Glacier Peaks Casino opens



## **1943-1961 Termination Era**

World War II increased pressure for termination. Ideological attacks increased, further budget cuts were made, and large numbers of Bureau personnel were lost to the war effort. The federal government focused on the international situation, and BIA operations were moved to Chicago. Indian interests were no longer a political issue significant enough to command the attention of the President or Secretary of the Interior.

In November 1944 delegates representing over fifty tribes gathered in Colorado and established the National Congress of American Indians. The preamble to the NCAI constitution proposed “to enlighten the public, preserve Indian cultural values, seek an equitable adjustment of tribal affairs, and secure and preserve their rights under treaties.

The years between 1945 and 1950 were marked by continued budget cuts for Indian tribes. The Indian land base had not sufficiently expanded to support returning GI’s as well as an



increasing Indian population. More than half of the able-bodied men and one-fifth of other employable persons on the reservations left to join the armed services or to work in the war industries. Despite the broadened experience and training received by Indian veterans and defense workers, many returned to reservations where there were inadequate opportunities for earning a livelihood.

An Act of May 14, 1948 authorized the Secretary to once again issue patents in fee for Indian lands. Sales of reservation lands, subject to the IRA, had been prohibited since it became law in 1934. The Act permitted the Secretary or his delegate to allow more Indian land to be transferred to non-Indians.

### **1953 Termination**

The policy of termination was not officially adopted until 1953 and was a policy of rapid assimilation. Beginning in the 1930's congressional criticism of Indian reorganizational policies culminated in the termination policy. This policy of termination ended in virtually all respects, the special relationship between a small number of tribes and the federal government.

The broader implications of termination for those tribes not directly terminated, were subjected to a series of laws transferring important area of responsibility from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to other federal agencies and to the states. Large amounts of Indian lands were allowed to pass into non-Indian hands once more. Tribal economic development was largely ignored and Indians were encouraged to seek employment off the reservation.

### **1953 House Concurrent Resolution 108**

The policy of Congress to rapidly make the Indians within the territorial limits of the United States subject to the same laws and entitled to the same privileges and responsibilities as are applicable to other citizens of the United States, to end the Indians status as wards of the United States, and to grant them all of the rights and prerogatives pertaining to American citizenship.

## 1954 Relocation

### Voluntary Relocation Program

The land resources were insufficient either in quantity or quality to support the present population. Many veterans and defense workers were returning to the reservation after World War II. The solution offered by the Bureau was the Voluntary Relocation Program. Relocation was begun in 1931, but the unwillingness of the federal government to finance further major rehabilitation programs was not a high priority program. The Voluntary Relocation Program was designed to place Indians in permanent off-reservation jobs to integrate them into urban American society. Once relocated, Indians were cut off from the special federal services that had once been available to them as reservation residents.



Participants in the program received limited assistance. Initially, the person received a one-way ticket to the city and subsistence allowance until the first pay check. The reservation population was increasing much faster than the national rate, industrial development was not happening, and a large portion of the inhabitants faced the alternative of remaining wholly or partially unemployed or of leaving home.

The success of relocation was difficult and lacked sustained federal assistance. The resilience of Indian culture and the strength of families were underestimated. The return rates to reservations estimate one-quarter to one-third by the Bureau studies. Yet, other statistics showed return rates to the reservation ranging from sixty to ninety percent. Cultural isolation and poverty were characteristic of those who remained in the city.

### 1955 Indian Health Service Program

In 1955, a special branch of the Public Health Service, now known as Indian Health Service, was established within the Department of Health and Human Services(since 1980). The HIS remains the agency that provides health services to Indians.

Because many Indian communities are isolated geographically and many Indian hospitals are small, the IHS makes extensive use of contracts with community hospitals and physicians to supplement its own direct services.

## **1961-Present      Self Determination Era**

### **Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965**

In recognition of the special educational needs of economically disadvantaged children, this act was originally enacted as part of President Johnson's War on Poverty. Title I was designed to provide compensatory education programs for economically disadvantaged children to improve their learning performances. Since most Indian students are eligible to participate under Title I, the program is one of the few federal, special, or categorical, education assistance programs affecting both reservation and non-reservation Indians. A related title of the same Act authorizes funding for bilingual and bicultural educational programs that benefit Indians at both BIA and state schools.

### **The Indian Civil Rights Act**

After 1968 states were permitted to extend jurisdiction over Indian lands only with consent of affected tribes. The controversial Title I of this Act limits the power of tribal governments by applying some of the language of the Bill of Rights to Indian Tribes, including the equal protection and due process clauses.

The Indian Civil Rights Act has remained controversial. Nevertheless, some view the Act as a recognition by Congress of the validity of the exercise of governmental powers by Indian tribes

in placing them, “in a role of responsibility and accountability” akin to that of federal, state and local governments.

## **1972 Indian Education Act**

The Indian Education Act of 1972 established the Office of Indian Education in the Department of Education, to support special educational programs for Indians. It was enacted following release of a report by the Special Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education, which found that Indian education in state public schools was characterized by unresponsive curricula, unmotivated teaching, a hostile atmosphere, and the absence of meaningful Indian input into the education process.

Many IEA programs are designed to improve basic reading, language, and mathematical skills, reduce dropout rates, and assist adult Indians in obtaining high school equivalency degrees. IEA programs also address special problems for Indians of off reservation and urban life, cultural disparities, and Indian identity.

## **1978 Public Law 81-874**

The original law was enacted to assist public school districts burdened by federal installations, primarily military bases. It is intended to provide assistance to school districts that have large blocks of tax exempt federal land, such as military bases and Indian reservations. It provides basic support funds, computed according to a statutory formula, to public school districts educating Indian children whose parents live or work on trust or restricted lands.

The funds may be used for general operating expenses, although not for construction, and often constitute a large percentage of the total operating budgets of districts encompassing reservations. In 1978 Congress amended Public Law 81-874 to require involvement of Indian parents in planning, development and operation of programs under the Act.

The second Impact Aid Law is Public Law 81-815, the School Facilities Construction Act, which was amended in 1953 to provide federal funds to public school districts burdened by tax exempt Indian land, as well as other federal property.



### **1978 Tribally Controlled Community Colleges**

In 1978 Congress enacted the Tribally Controlled Community College Assistance Act, to provide grants for operation and improvement of tribal colleges. The authorization from the Secretary of the Interior is to make grants for general operating funds to defray the expenses of educationally related activities at these institutions.

To be eligible under the Act colleges must be governed by a board of directors comprised of a majority of Indians, must undertake to meeting the needs of Indian students, and, if in operation for more than one year, must have a majority of Indian students.

### **1978 Indian Child Welfare Act**

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which was adopted by Congress in 1978, applies to child custody proceedings in state courts involving "Indian" children--children of Native American ancestry. The provisions of the ICWA represent a dramatic departure from the procedural and substantive laws that most states have enacted to govern child custody proceedings. Because Indian children are treated uniquely in the legal system, and because there

is an increasing number of court proceedings involving Indian children, the need for lawyers to understand the ICWA is becoming imperative. (Since the ICWA was enacted, more than 250 state and federal court decisions have been rendered.)

A look at history reveals why Congress determined a special law was needed to protect the rights of Indian children and their parents. Before 1978, as many as 25 to 35 percent of the Indian children in certain states were removed from their homes and placed in non-Indian homes by state courts, welfare agencies, and private adoption agencies. Non-Indian judges and social workers--failing to appreciate traditional Indian child-rearing practices--perceived day-to-day life in the children's Indian homes as contrary to the children's best interests.



## **1978 American Indian Religious Freedom Act**

On and after August 11, 1978, it shall be the policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.

In 1882, the Secretary of the Interior Henry M. Teller, demanded the end of all ceremonial dances due to their hampering of the United States civilization. The Bureau of Indian Affairs enforced the laws that would imprison up to thirty days, any native practicing their traditional religion. A law was also passed that would "oppress Indians for wearing their hair in braid and another law outlawing the sun dance."

## **P.L. 101-477 Native American Languages Act of 1990**

It is the policy of the United States to preserve, protect, and promote the rights and freedom of Native Americans to use, practice, and develop Native American languages; to allow

exceptions to teacher certification requirements for Federal programs and programs funded in whole or in part by the Federal Government, for instruction in Native American languages when such teacher certification requirements hinder the employment of qualified teachers who teach in



Native American languages, and to encourage State and Territorial Governments to make similar exceptions; and to encourage and support the use of Native American languages as a medium of instruction.

### **1990 The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act**

The NAGPRA legislation

signed on November 23, 1990 by President George Bush, Sr. culminates decades of struggle by Native American tribal governments and people to protect against grave desecration, to repatriate thousands of dead relatives or ancestors, and to retrieve stolen or improperly acquired religious and cultural property for Native owners. NAGPRA is a complex law that sets out detailed procedures and legal standards governing the repatriation of human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony and provides for the protection and ownership of materials unearthed on federal and tribal lands.





# Blackfeet Language Lesson

By Arlene Wildgun-Augare

## Vocabulary Quiz-Matching Blackfoot terms with English

- |     |               |            |
|-----|---------------|------------|
| 1.  | ma tun l      | yesterday  |
| 2.  | pa po ka      | tomorrow   |
| 3.  | kon sko       | hurry      |
| 4.  | man l ka pi   | dream      |
| 5.  | sik si ka     | mountain   |
| 6.  | a nit ta kit  | young man  |
| 7.  | mis ta ki     | good       |
| 8.  | oo mi         | Blackfeet  |
| 9.  | so ka pi      | person     |
| 10. | a pi na ko si | give me    |
| 11. | ma ta pi      | snow       |
| 12. | ko kit        | over there |
| 13. | poh sah pot   | to look    |
| 14. | mist a poot   | come here  |
| 15. | ao sa pi      | go away    |

Key. 1. yesterday, 2. dream, 3. snow, 4. young man, 5. Blackfeet, 6. hurry, 7. mountain, 8. over there,

9. good, 10. tomorrow, 11. person, 12. give me, 13. come here, 14. go away, 15. to look.



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Mr. Earl Old Person

A special acknowledgement to the Band and Society Leaders of the Blackfeet people.

## Blackfeet Poster Artists Biography

**Deanne Morris.**



I am an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Tribe, married to Roger Morris and we have five children. I attended Browning public schools and Blackfeet Community College. I have been doing traditional art for the past 20 years and attended numerous shows. The art medium I use is hand tanned buckskin, Glass and brass beads, feather work, pictograph hide paintings, beaded bags, containers, and regalia. I do traditional forms to replicate the artistry of the Blackfeet in past times. I enjoy doing this type of art to preserve Blackfeet culture. The importance of traditional art is in the language used in the designs to tell stories handed down for many generations.

**Gordon Monroe.**



I am an enrolled Blackfeet member, born in Browning MT. My mother was a full-blood Blackfeet and father a Metis. I am proud of my heritage that embraces a lot of people, history and life struggles. My art education began right after high school with a 7-year Master's of Art Technology from Bob Scriver Art Studio and Foundry, 4-year apprenticeship under associate artist, Neil Parson and exhibited with fellow Blackfeet artist, King Kuka. They taught me not only the ability to create art, but to teach art, "Blackfeet Art". My grandmother, Katie RunningWolf, HeavyRunner, taught me Blackfeet History.

**Howard Pepion.**



I was born in Browning, MT to Leroy and Eileen (Bostwick) Pepion. My paternal grandfather was John Pepion, descendant of Mountain Chief and my grandmother was Julia MadPlume. My maternal grandparents were from the Bostwicks & Schiltz families. I attended grade school at Badger Fisher, it was here I was introduced to the usual basic forms of art. Throughout my life art was always a part of whatever I did and is still an important aspect. Western and Indian art is my specialty and I do commissions and enter art shows around the country.

**Anne DesRosier-Grant.**



I was raised in Browning, MT, growing up on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. My parents are Fred DesRosier and Ramona Croff. My Paternal grandparents were Peter LeRoy DesRosier and Mary Freda Campbell. My Maternal grandparents were Edward Christopher Croff (Eagle Bear) and Mary Katherine Matte (Yellow Mink Woman). I graduate in 1979 from Browning High School, attended Advertising and Graphic Design at the Art Institute of Colorado, Denver. We have four wonderful children. In 2007, I graduated from the University of Great Falls with a BA in Elementary Education. I currently teach at the DeLaSalle Blackfeet School.

**Lyle J. Omeasoo.**



I was born in Browning, MT, of Blackfeet and Cree descent. I am married to Anna CalfRobe Omeasoo and we have 5 children, they all encourage me to pursue my career as an artist and be a good role model. My artistic abilities and creative styles were self-taught. *"Having pride for the Blackfeet People and living among the resources of my culture and history, I strive to be a role model for both the young and old. My culture, that is sacred to me, is expressed through my art. My style of art stands alone amongst others. It stands alone because it is sacred."*



